THE STORY OF THE 168TH INFANTRY

JOHN H. TABER

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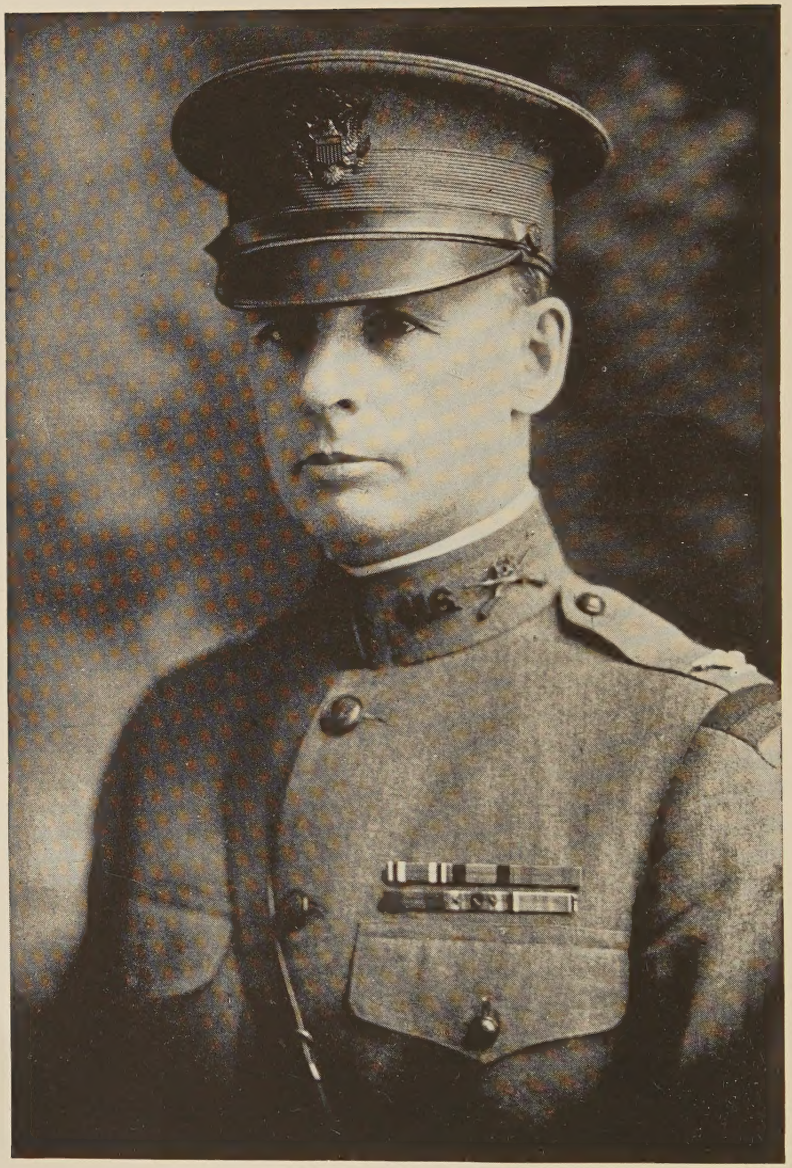


COLONEL ERNEST R. BENNETT, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 168TH INFANTRY FROM AUGUST 5, 1917, TO SEPTEMBER 3, 1918

THE STORY OF THE 168TH INFANTRY

BY
JOHN H. TABER

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

PUBLISHED AT IOWA CITY IOWA IN 1925 BY
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

To the Glorious Dead of the 168th Infantry
This Book is Dedicated

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

RUPERT BROOKE

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The State Historical Society of Iowa has undertaken the publication of *The Story of the 168th Infantry* at the suggestion of the History Committee of the 168th Infantry Association. As a contemporary account of the Regiment, written by a participant in the great conflict, these volumes will be of unusual interest to the general reader and of peculiar value to students of history.

In preparing the manuscript for publication the Historical Society has not undertaken to edit its pages critically — only minor alterations, such as punctuation and capitalization, have been made. Thus the story of the Regiment as written by the author is published practically without alteration or documentation.

The proofs were read by Mr. Bruce E. Mahan and Miss Ruth A. Gallaher; and the index was compiled by Mr. J. A. Swisher.

Benj. F. Shambaugh

Office of the Superintendent and Editor
The State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa City Iowa 1925

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

About a month after the Armistice, while the 168th Infantry was marching into Germany, Major Guy S. Brewer suggested to the Regimental Commander, Colonel Mathew A. Tinley, that he appoint a board to write a history of the organization while it was yet intact. Responding to the suggestion with enthusiasm, Colonel Tinley selected three officers — Lieutenant John W. Ball, Captain William J. Tucker, and Captain William R. Witherell — for the task. When at last the Regiment reached the Rhine these officers, relieved of all other duty, were enabled to devote themselves to the collection and compilation of the material for the history. The records of the Regiment were at their disposal, and they personally searched out every possible source of information for the intimate details that make a living story. They were occupied with this work for practically the entire period of the 168th's service in the Army of Occupation. They did not collaborate in the writing, but composed independently the sections assigned them. I had some small part in the writing of the original manuscript, and shortly after the demobilization of the Regiment I wrote several chapters that had been omitted.

For three years this draft remained in its unfinished condition. Then, at the annual reunion of the Regiment

in the fall of 1922 a committee was appointed to publish the history. This committee commissioned me to complete it. The manuscript prepared in Germany furnished the backbone and much of the meat of this book, and whatever merit it may possess is due in large part to the efforts of its authors. It was necessary, however, to rearrange the material and to reject some of it; to add connecting chapters; and finally to rewrite the entire work to obtain unity of style. In the rewriting the manuscript was expanded to approximately twice its original size.

In preparing the material I carefully studied the records of the Regiment and of the Division in the files of the War Department at Washington; I drew generously on the reports, orders, diaries, field messages, and other information furnished me by members of the organization, and on my own experience; I gained further information by personal interview and correspondence, not only with members of the Regiment, but of other regiments with which it came in contact during its combat activities. So many have contributed to the building up of this story that it is impossible to acknowledge their individual service. But I wish in particular to acknowledge my indebtedness to Major General Mathew A. Tinley, Brigadier General Lloyd D. Ross, Colonel Ernest R. Bennett, Colonel Guy S. Brewer, the original chairman of the committee, who was killed in a motor accident in August, 1923, Colonel Glenn C. Haynes, Colonel Claude M. Stanley, Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur S. Conkling,

Major Walter H. Nead, Major Frank L. Williams, Chaplains Winfred E. Robb and Roscoe C. Hatch, Captain Erney W. Johnson, Lieutenant James E. Breslin, Lieutenant Kirt M. Chapman, Lieutenant Harold T. Fisher, Lieutenant Theodore E. Jones, Lieutenant H. C. Peyton, Lieutenant William N. Richards and other members of the Headquarters Company who wrote *The History of The Pioneers,* Sergeant Harold N. Denny of Company B, Sergeant William J. Fleming of Company C, Sergeant John R. Mahany, Musician 1st Class Ralph Hartwig, and Private H. G. Lawrence of the Headquarters Company, and Private James D. Matchett of Company I; and to Miss Hazel Chamberlain, Mrs. F. W. Mutchler, and Miss Mildred West for their invaluable assistance in the compilation of the roster.

JOHN H. TABER

NEW YORK CITY

CONTENTS

Editor's Introduction vii

Author's Preface ix

I. The Third Iowa Answers the Call . . 1

II. Camp Mills 8

III. The Voyage on the Grant 18

IV. Back at Camp Mills 26

V. Across the Atlantic 30

VI. The Regiment Arrives in England . . 36

VII. France at Last 40

VIII. Rimaucourt 42

IX. Into the Line 63

X. Life in the Trenches 76

XI. March the Fifth 88

XII. The First American Attack 112

XIII. Filling out the First Month . . . 132

XIV. The 168th Returns to the Line . . . 157

XV. The Scouts 173

XVI. Interludes 189

XVII. Behind the Lines 197

XVIII. May and the Gas Attacks 207
XIX. The Last Weeks in Lorraine . . . 238
XX. From Lorraine to the Champagne . . 260
XXI. The Battle of the Champagne . . . 272
XXII. From the Marne to the Battle Line . . 313
XXIII. The Battle at La Croix Rouge Farm . . 321
XXIV. The Advance to the Ourcq 342
XXV. The Capture of Hill 212 351
XXVI. The Capture of Sergy 381

ILLUSTRATIONS

Colonel Ernest R. Bennett . . . . *Frontispiece*
Lt. Col. Guy S. Brewer . . . . . *facing* 48
Major Glenn C. Haynes . . . . . *facing* 48
Lt. Col. Claude M. Stanley . . . . *facing* 48
Major Lloyd D. Ross . . . . . *facing* 48
Abandon Ship Drill on the Grant . . . *facing* 49
Rainbow Troops in Rimaucourt . . . *facing* 49
Chaplain Henry W. Strickland . . . *facing* 64
Chaplain Roscoe C. Hatch . . . . *facing* 64
The Church at Rimaucourt . . . . *facing* 64
Chaplain Winfred E. Robb . . . . *facing* 64
The 168th Arrives in Rolampont . . . *facing* 65
Neufmaisons . . . . . *facing* 65

Support Trench after a Raid . . . . *facing* 96
Front Line Trench after Bombardment . *facing* 96
Where Captain McHenry Met His Death . *facing* 97
Crater Blown out by 10-inch Shell . . *facing* 97
Men of M Company in Neufmaisons . . *facing* 112
Modern Improvements at Neufmaisons . . *facing* 112
Airplane Photo of Neuviller . . . . *facing* 113
Advanced Post in Front of G. C. 9 . . . *facing* 144
A Patrol of the 168th . . . . . *facing* 144
In No Man's Land . . . . . *facing* 145
Over the Top on March 17th . . . . *facing* 145
Airplane View of Badonviller . . . *facing* 160
First Aid Station at Village Negre . . *facing* 161
Reserve Position at Village Negre . . . *facing* 161
Colonel G. E. Allie . . . . . *facing* 176
A Section of Camp 3/5 . . . . . *facing* 177
Battery C 150th Field Artillery . . . *facing* 177
Miss Elizabeth Potts . . . . . *facing* 192
Miss Christine Johnston . . . . . *facing* 192
Mrs. Edith W. Knowles . . . . . *facing* 192
Leon Willard, the Alsatian . . . . *facing* 192
F Company Men in a Trench . . . . *facing* 192
Major Charles J. Casey . . . . . *facing* 193
Major Emory C. Worthington . . . *facing* 193

Exploded Gas Drums . . . . . *facing* 193
Victims of the First Gas Attack . . . *facing* 224
Funeral Procession of Captain Fleur . . *facing* 224
Burial of Gas Attack Victims . . . . *facing* 225
Children Decorating Rainbow Graves . . *facing* 225
Rue Gambetta, Badonviller . . . . *facing* 240
Camouflaged Road . . . . . *facing* 240
Lower Part of Badonviller . . . . *facing* 241
Officers' Quarters Camp De Ker Arvor . . *facing* 241
Major Henry E. Bunch . . . . . *facing* 288
Major Wilbur S. Conkling . . . . *facing* 288
Major Orville B. Yates . . . . . *facing* 288
Lieutenant Leon Bentz . . . . . *facing* 288
Camouflage Detail at Work . . . . *facing* 289
Chow Detail Starting for Front Lines . . *facing* 289
General H. J. E. Gouraud . . . . *facing* 304
Typical Champagne Country . . . . *facing* 305
Horses Slaughtered by Bombardment . . *facing* 305
The Croix Rouge Farm . . . . . *facing* 368
Boche Plane Brought Down . . . . *facing* 369
German Dead on the Ourcq Battle Field . *facing* 369
Where the First Battalion Was Stopped . *facing* 384
Artillery Passing through Sergy . . . *facing* 384
The Church at Sergy . . . . . *facing* 385

I

THE THIRD IOWA ANSWERS THE CALL

Like a giant devilfish stretching out its tentacles to ensnare the whole of the civilized world, the terrific conflict that had been raging in Europe for three long years was drawing inexorably closer to America.

The successive tragedies of Belgium — Louvain and Cavell — the *Lusitania,* and Reims had been viewed on this side of the water with horror, and there were many who felt from the first that the place of the United States was at the side of the Allied nations. But the time was not yet come. However, the continued acts of barbarism on the part of the Germans and their disregard and unveiled contempt for the rights of neutrals were gradually molding public sentiment into fair unanimity, and there finally came a day when Americans could once more hold their heads high. That day Woodrow Wilson went before Congress and asked it to declare that a state of war existed between the United States and the German Empire.

So, on the 7th of April, 1917, the wheels of a powerful war machine that was steadily to gain in momentum were set in motion. The entire nation was united behind its President, and no State was more ready to throw the weight of its wealth and resources into the balance than Iowa. Its National Guard was immediately placed on war footing, and recruiting stations were opened all over the State to bring it up to full strength. Among the organizations thus called into service was the Third Iowa Infantry.

As an entity this regiment had existed only since 1892 when, in the reorganization of the State Guard, eight companies of the Fifth Iowa Infantry were combined with four of the old Third to form the present unit. But many of the individual companies had existed long before this time. Company L, locally known as the Dodge Light Guards, had the distinction of being the oldest military organization in Iowa, having been formed in Council Bluffs in 1855 by General Grenville M. Dodge with the primary motive of protecting the community against attacks by the Sioux Indians. It later served with distinction all through the Civil War.

Called into service by President McKinley on the 26th of April, 1898, the regiment served until the 2nd of November, 1899, as the 51st Iowa Volunteers, seeing in the meantime much active service against the Philippine Insurrectos. Upon its reorganization it became known as the 55th Iowa Infantry, which remained its official designation until July, 1915, when it resumed that of the Third Iowa Infantry.

In the summer of 1916, when war with Mexico seemed imminent, the Third Iowa Infantry was called into Federal service and sent with other units of the National Guard to the Border, where it remained on duty until February, 1917. The men had scarcely been mustered out when they were drawn back into the service.

The first few months were occupied with recruiting and training new men. Then on the 15th of July, upon the call of the President, the regiment was assembled at its home stations, and by the 5th of August it had again been mustered into Federal service.

Its personnel was, of course, composed wholly of volunteers, and enough of the parent organization was

still serving with it to keep alive its spirit and to carry on its traditions. For of that band that had set out so confidently for the Philippines in June, 1898, there remained a small but loyal representation. The erstwhile lieutenant of Company H was now its commanding officer; his lieutenant colonel, the three battalion commanders, the chief of the Medical Detachment, five company officers, and a number of enlisted men, all had been members of that original expeditionary force.

Early in August the War Department announced the organization of a purely National Guard division which was to include the Third Iowa as one of its four infantry regiments. But not as the Third Iowa, for from now on it was to be known as the 168th U. S. Infantry.

Now that the disposition of the regiment was settled, Colonel Ernest R. Bennett directed the outlying units to assemble at Des Moines. So, on the 17th of August, the command was united at the State Fair Grounds. Machinery Hall, where the local companies had been quartered, was needed for exhibits for the fair which was to open in ten days; so it was necessary to look for a new camp site. Space was offered at Camp Dodge, a few miles to the northwest, where a huge cantonment for the draft army was under construction. But sentiment outweighed all other considerations — it was from the Fair Grounds that the regiment had left in 1898, and from the Fair Grounds it should leave in 1917.

Accordingly, arrangements were made to pitch camp on the hill east of the exhibition grounds, on land belonging to the State Game Farm. It was almost with pleasure that the men faced the discomforts of an unprepared location rather than the accommodations of a cantonment, as a concession to regimental tradition.

As far as natural beauty was concerned, the situation could not have been improved. On a high hill reached by a winding roadway up through the Fair Grounds Grove, it extended from the edge of the wood into a little valley to the east — on either side great reaches of fertile fields merging into the distant horizon, and to the west the active capital city of the Commonwealth of Iowa.

The company strength, originally set at 100, was later increased to 150 men per line company; and now at the last moment, upon the recommendation of our experts in France, it was decided to further increase it to 250. Had this recommendation been approved a month earlier, it would have been an easy matter to fill up the ranks by enlistment, for there were many eager applicants clamoring for admission at the time recruiting was suspended. There was no time for that now, however, and the difficulty was solved by transferring a sufficient number from the First and Second Iowa Infantry Regiments to bring up the total enlisted strength of the 168th to 3605 men. This necessitated the transfer of 813 from the First Iowa, and 840 from the Second. All grades were included, each company furnishing its proportionate share to the corresponding letter company. By this transfer every section of the State, and practically every town, was represented in the regiment.

On the 20th the new members, in groups of from one to 250, began to arrive at camp. Some had traveled a long distance, carrying heavy packs. They came straggling in at all hours of the day and night, and the already overworked company officers had to be on constant duty. There was a woeful lack of equipment, not only in uniforms and ordnance, but in tents as well; and to house them all, a line of pup tents was set up below the pyramidals.

Much work had to be done, and at breakneck speed, for the order transporting the regiment to the eastern coast was expected at any moment. The records of the transfers had to be brought forward, and numberless requisitions had to be filled; those who had been overlooked before were now inoculated against typhoid, paratyphoid, diphtheria, smallpox, and for every other disease for which a serum had been discovered; and further physical examinations were given. On the other hand, little attention was paid to training. On one side of the camp was the State Game Farm, cut up into pens for game and ponds for fish breeding. To the west were the exposition grounds, and to the north and east, woods; so there was no opportunity for drill, even of a preliminary nature. The officers were so occupied with administrative duties that they scarcely found time for the few lectures and hikes scheduled.

The tented city within the State Fair Grounds proved by far the greatest attraction of the 1917 exposition. At the call of a bugle from the hilltop, thousands forgot all else but the soldiers. As yet the general attitude of enthusiasm was undamped by casualty lists. Not many pictured these very much alive, altogether cheerful youngsters on the battle field, wounded and dying.

The 168th made its first and final appearance as a whole before its own people at a review on the 29th of August. Although they had been gathered only recently from the four corners of the State, and had never had an opportunity to drill together, the soldiers marched like veterans around the half-mile track in a column of platoons. An enormous crowd, one of the greatest ever gathered in Iowa, thundered out cheer after cheer. There could be no doubt that the State was proud of the 168th.

The Colonel, who had left his place at the head of the column to join the Governor in the reviewing stand, was justifiably proud of his command.

It was not until the first trains backed into the terminal at the Fair Grounds that the members of the 168th learned what leaving home was to mean to them. War, until then, had seemed such a remote and nebulous possibility that few had ever thought of themselves as actually in it. But now they realized, as did their friends and families, that every move was a step nearer to the uncertainty of the battle line. The fear that this might be the final parting, that this might be the last embrace, made more bitter the ordeal of farewell. It was amid smiles forced through tears, and stifled sobs from breaking hearts, that the crowded trains moved slowly out and disappeared in the distance. By noon of September 10th the camp on the hill was deserted.

Before they were well across the State of Iowa, the men of the 168th had settled down to make the best of a three days' tiresome trip, and they found much to occupy their attention. These lads, many of whom had never set foot beyond the limits of their own State, were on their way to tread the very battle fields of Caesar and of Attila, of Louis XIV, Napoleon, and von Moltke, and in their turn they, too, were to help make history. This was the beginning of a strange adventure, indeed, for those who had known only the placid life of the peaceful prairie — a stranger adventure than even the most imaginative mind among them could have foreseen.

Great crowds met the seven sections as they halted for short periods at Chicago, Fort Wayne, Buffalo, Elmira, and Scranton; and many a man of the regiment has reason to remember the generosity and good will of the

people that welcomed them en route. Finally, after an all-night wait on a siding near Jamaica, Long Island, the first three sections moved out in the early morning of the 13th of September to Garden City, and there disgorged themselves of their human freight. It was but a short hike to Camp Albert A. Mills.

II

CAMP MILLS

Here on the flat, uninteresting Hempstead Plain, midway between Garden City and Hempstead, a new organization, destined to be one of the outstanding units of the A. E. F., was assembling. The 42nd Division, organized in early August, was composed of especially selected units of the National Guard chosen from twenty-six States and the District of Columbia. Every section of the country, with the exception of New England, contributed to it. States so widely separated as Oregon and Georgia, New York and California, sent their sons to form this most truly national of all our divisions. Covering in its representation a span as far flung as the arc of the rainbow, and with a complexion as varied, it was happily named the Rainbow Division. Colonel Douglas MacArthur, the then Chief of Staff, is credited with this inspiration at the very time of the Division's organization. The aptness of the appellation was quickly recognized by the public, and so the 42nd became the first of the American divisions to be known by a distinctive name. The colors of the rainbow were never more indissolubly blended than the units of this organization, for of this sectional mélange was born the finest esprit de corps that ever led troops to victory.

When the 168th got settled in camp, and had time to look about, it found itself between the 167th Infantry from Alabama, with which it was brigaded, and the 151st Machine Gun Battalion from Georgia; while to the west

lay the camp of the Ohio regiment, the 166th Infantry. Friendships soon sprang up among all of these organizations, but none equalled the attachment which grew up between the 167th and 168th. The foundation for this friendship was laid the very first night.

Fate had divisioned together two regiments, the 165th, formerly the 69th New York, and the 167th, once the Fourth Alabama, which had opposed each other in some of the most bitter struggles of the Civil War. The outcome of those encounters is somewhat in doubt, but all good members of the 168th will declare, although their forebears fought on the opposite side, that the successful contestant was from the South. Enough to say that the fight did not end with the Peace of Appomattox: the feelings born of that struggle still rankled, despite the passage of time.

Fate had not only placed these two regiments in the same division, but had placed them side by side when they came together for the first time in more than fifty years. The Iowans learned soon after their arrival that there had already been a clash, and that Alabama was out for gore. The Southerners that night, the rumor said, were going to "clean up" Iowa. They had battled New York, and Iowa was next.

The prairie boys, however, were not to be caught napping; plans were made, unknown to the officers, and nightfall heard among the men of the 168th whisperings that promised ill. At seven o'clock, two groups in menacing attitude faced each other on the road dividing their camps. A group from the other side crossed over. Hostilities seemed unavoidable. Suddenly out of the milling crowd came in the soft drawl of the South:

"What do you-all mean, fightin'? Iowa's our friend."

It was the voice of a peacemaker, and it extinguished forever the spark that might have exploded the charge of sectional antagonism and permanently disrupted a potential friendship of lasting qualities. For instead of battling, the two forces joined arms and wandered away.

Never was there a friendship of closer unity; never an association of more pleasant memory. For throughout the war the two regiments fought together, always side by side, always with the thought of the other as much in mind as the thought of themselves and of their cause. No hungry Iowan was ever refused at an Alabama kitchen, even in the days of slimmest ration; and never did a lad from the Southland find any but friends around the Iowa camp. The Iowa latchstring will be out for Alabama as long as the 168th is remembered in its home State.

That night, too, saw the end of ill feeling between the 165th and the 167th. In joining the two in a common mission, Fate had provided for the eradication of memories of a past fratricidal conflict. From now on the elements of the Rainbow were to work as one.

Mess shacks had already been built when the regiment came into camp, and by noon the tentage which they had brought with them was in place. Enough new canvas was issued to house the entire regiment in pyramidals, but only by crowding ten or twelve in each. That completed, the men were free for the rest of the day, which was spent chiefly in gazing in rapt awe at the airplanes circling and dipping gracefully in the sky above them. Many of them had never before seen an airplane, and to these it was a fascinating sight.

The next day the 168th received its first leavening of alien blood. About sixty graduates of the first Officers'

Training Camp were assigned to fill up the shortage in the commissioned personnel. Up to this time three harassed men in each company had been doing the work of six. New York, Texas, and the New England States furnished the majority of the newcomers. They were for the most part young, eager, college-bred men, excellently grounded in theory and familiar with the later developments of their branch of modern warfare, but lacking in the practical experience of handling troops. Volunteers, too, they soon absorbed the spirit of the National Guard, in spite of their training under Regular Army instructors.

The stay at Camp Mills was concerned chiefly with the hard work preparatory to crossing the ocean; equipping, packing, and discarding; and not least of all, whipping the troops into shape. Work was now commenced in earnest. A drill field about a mile from camp was set aside for the 168th, and there hour after hour in the broiling sun or drenching rain they toiled, fitting themselves for service overseas.

A great deal of time was devoted to the new bayonet drill, for the men were told that the Germans disliked cold steel and that the bayonet was the most effective weapon of the infantryman. This manual, which did not arouse the pleasantest of expectations, was calculated not only to make the individual adept in the use of the bayonet but also to fire him with blood lust. To produce a good fighter, it is necessary first to awaken in him his primitive instincts. And the youngsters from the Middle West were far from blood-thirsty. Every jab punctured a mentally-pictured Kaiser; every thrust saw the finish of one of his subjects. If the knife became too deeply imbedded in the body, it could be withdrawn by planting the feet on his trunk and pulling, or by shooting him

through point-blank; if he attempted to resist the withdrawal of a bayonet implanted in his loins, there were means to force him to loose his hold. It was an ugly business, but necessary, and one that gave the men some sort of idea of what they had to face.

Hardened into first-class physical form by vigorous exercise and firmly encased in the iron bands of discipline through the constant repetition of close order drill, the men of the Rainbow, by the time they left Camp Mills, were well prepared to meet the foe.

The 168th was poorly equipped when it left Iowa, and as it was the last unit to reach the concentration camp, it had to rush to catch up with the others. While the line companies were sweating out on the drill fields, the Supply Company was working at full speed to procure and distribute supplies and equipment. Finally each man was issued a woolen uniform and the short trench coat that replaced the longer garment with its hampering skirts. This work was not entirely completed until the night before embarkation; and it was because of the order requiring every division to be fully equipped before it could sail that the Rainbow was held back while the 26th, or Yankee Division, was permitted to have the distinction of being the first National Guard and the second American division to arrive in France. But after all, the Rainbow was the first complete division to cross the seas. When it was finally settled in its training area with its organization intact, the First Division, which had preceded it by four months, and the 26th, by a few weeks, were still lacking some of their auxiliary units.

On Sunday, the 23rd of September, the Division was reviewed by the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker. It was the first time that a division under the new war

regulations — companies of 250, battalions of 1000, and regiments of 3700 — was ever seen in the United States. An immense throng from New York and all parts of Long Island came to witness the spectacle, and to cheer as line after line of sturdy khaki figures, lean, bronzed, and erect, marched past.

This was followed a few days later by a review of the 84th Brigade, composed of the 167th and 168th Infantry Regiments and the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, in honor of the United States Senators from Iowa, Albert B. Cummins and William S. Kenyon, and the Governor, William L. Harding.

But there were variations to the steady grind of training. Passes were liberally issued for the purpose of visiting New York, less than an hour distant; and at some time or other practically every member of the regiment had an opportunity to walk up Broadway, see the bright lights, the skyscrapers, Grant's Tomb, the fleet in the river, and anything else that appealed to him.

The residents of the towns in the vicinity of Camp Mills did their best to make the men feel that although they were far from home they were still surrounded by friends. The tradition of Eastern reserve and selfishness was banished by the outpouring of welcome and hospitality that met the soldiers on every hand.

Whole communities joined to entertain them; and private homes, clubs, and country estates were opened to them. Perhaps the best remembered of all is the village of Forest Hills, which during the second week of the stay in camp had 1200 of the Iowa men as guests at one time. Special trains carried them from Garden City, and motors met them at the station to take them — not to some public hall for the conventional meal that is served

to orphans and conventions, but to comfortable private homes for a real dinner. Following the meal the men were assembled in the town square for an entertainment which, in its variety, had an appeal for everyone in the crowd. Frank Keenan, Helen Keller, Bob Fitzsimmons, and a score of others provided diversion up to the very moment of the departure of the train.

Frequent trips were thereafter made to improve the friendships the first meeting had developed, and the regiment always had a warm place in its heart for the generous public-spirited people of Forest Hills. The old towns of Flushing and Hempstead and Jamaica and Rockville Center royally entertained groups from time to time, and even busy, hard-hearted New York entertained several hundred of them as guests of the Commercial Club.

In spite of the nearness of New York and her friendly suburbs, the soldiers soon learned to furnish their own entertainment. Boxing and wrestling matches were staged nightly under the direction of Chaplain Robb beneath a calcium lamp near Colonel Bennett's headquarters, and the Y, with its big tent between the Iowa and Ohio encampments, provided what amusement it could.

There was one unscheduled entertainment that was immensely enjoyed by all who took part, and that included practically the entire regiment and portions of two others. Soon after the camp was established, some brethren of Semitic persuasion opened a line of canteens on the southern edge of the camp site and proceeded to fleece the soldiers, who for want of closer conveniences patronized them in large numbers. But one day they went too far. One of them short-changed an Iowan,

giving him change for a dollar instead of for the twenty-dollar bill he had proffered, and refused to make restitution. The news spread like wild-fire through camp, and that evening a wilder mob stormed the line. When they finished it looked as if a Kansas cyclone had struck the place. The sentries were helpless in the face of such a crowd, and it was impossible to fix the blame on any one or any group of individuals, for it was quite dark and the raiders quickly cached any souvenirs that were rescued from the ruins. Every one was confined to quarters as a general punishment; and the owners put in a claim for damages, allowing for a wide margin of profit. However, in the opinion of the majority, it was a grand scramble and well worth the trouble. Some six months later, in France, each company was assessed a goodly number of francs "in payment of claim from Levine Brothers, Brooklyn, New York".

The thought that had been uppermost in the minds of all since the arrival in the East was, of course, "When do we sail?" After several weeks the novelty of new environment and strange sights had faded, and the monotony of camp life and drill was wearing. The command grew restive and impatient for the next move.

On the 23rd of September, Lieutenant Colonel Tinley slipped quietly away; his absence was soon noted; and when it was learned that he had sailed to prepare the way for the regiment, rumors began to fly about as thick as leaves before an autumn wind. But from then until the last of the first week in October, there was nothing to indicate that the steady routine of drill, parade, hiking, and lectures would ever be interrupted.

Then on the 8th came the order to have all freight ready for shipping in two days; the afternoons from

then on were to be given over to the marking and packing of baggage and equipment. The name of the transport and the time of departure were closely guarded, and all that was known was that our boat was to be No. 7 in the convoy, for all freight and baggage was marked with the figure 7 in a circle. Some time previous the trunks of the enlisted men had been disposed of and barrack bags substituted, and the baggage of the officers had been pared down to a minimum. On the 16th everything but the kitchens and officers' baggage was sent to the dock, and it was known that the day was not far off. And at the last hour the regiment was informed of the generous provision the government had made for the issue of life insurance for all soldiers. The officers and company clerks stayed up half the night writing applications for the men and adjusting the allowances for their families under the recently issued regulations.

On the 17th it was officially announced that the outfit would leave the next day. It was with mixed feelings that the news was received. Now that the time had come, Camp Mills didn't seem a half bad place, and it was after all the last link with home. But one couldn't very well get into the fight without crossing the ocean. It was a busy day; the last bit of baggage had to be packed, the camp thoroughly policed, and the last letter written home.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 18th the clear call of a bugle in the crisp October air stirred the camp to life and sent some thousands of men bustling to and fro. Tents were furled, men lined up and inspected, and all was in readiness. At ten o'clock the regiment moved out, marched to the Clinton Avenue Station, and entrained for the short ride to Long Island City. There it was transferred to ferries which pushed their weighted bulks

down the East River under the graceful arch of Brooklyn Bridge, around the southern point of Manhattan Island, and headed up the North River to the Hoboken piers of the Hamburg-American Line.

The *President Grant,* a boat of 18,000 gross tons, formerly in the German merchant marine, was moored at the dock, waiting for her first cargo of American soldiers. In a few hours she had swallowed into her dark interior the entire regiment. At half past nine that evening in a cold drizzle the vessel slowly backed from her berth, righted herself with the aid of a few puffing tugs, and like a phantom ship, dark, silent, with every port-hole tightly closed, glided down the river. The few officers on deck watched the hazy outline of the towering city gradually merge into the night, gazed intently until Liberty, her lighted torch raised as if in benediction, was lost to view, and then without speaking went below. The next morning a tossing, boundless sea encompassed the *Grant.*

III

THE VOYAGE ON THE GRANT

The voyage on the *Grant* will always be looked back upon as a wild nightmare — as something too unsavory, too unpleasant, to be real. For three years the boat had lain idle at her dock, rusting and growing more unserviceable every day from disuse. Then as a culminating stroke, just before our government seized her, her crew jimmied her engines, presumably beyond hope of repair. But the need for ships was pressing, so she was hastily reconditioned, stripped of her fittings, and declared ready for use as a transport.

The American Navy in taking over the *Grant* had apparently worked with but one end in view — to get her into service in the minimum of time, without concern as to how long she would hold together. Of her crew of approximately 800, perhaps one-twentieth had had some sort of sea service. Before censuring too heavily the captain and officers of the *Grant* for what were considered stupid restrictions and criminal mismanagement, it is only fair to allow for the tremendous strain under which they were laboring. The responsibility of transporting troops for the first time over dangerous seas in a ship in which they had little confidence and with a green crew would have distracted the most experienced of men.

By making use of her cargo space, it was possible to cram nearly five thousand precious lives into a vessel designed to carry 1200. In addition to the 168th Infantry,

the Headquarters of the 84th Infantry Brigade, Ambulance Companies No. 165 and 166, the 149th Machine Gun Battalion, the 117th Field Signal Battalion, Field Hospital No. 166, and the Headquarters of the Ambulance Section, 117th Sanitary Train, were assigned to the *Grant*. The men were cooped in the lower decks — some so near the water line that the port-holes had to be closed in the slightest sea. The three-tiered bunks left room for one to turn over, but no more. In fact there was such a jam that, had a torpedo ever hit the ship, the history of several military organizations would have ended then and there. One of the men who had been in the army before, and who was somewhat familiar with the conditions with which a soldier has to contend, remarked: "Well, I know that I have eaten like a hog, and maybe I've lived like one, but I'm damned if I've ever been crated before."

Due to lack of space in which to feed the troops — and the less said about the food the better — it soon became necessary to reduce the meals to two a day. The lines stretching into the mess-halls remained for hours; and before one line was altogether fed, that for the next meal was already forming. Fresh water was scarce, and it became the habit to bribe the sailors for a canteenful at prices from fifty cents up.

The ship was a dark place after sundown, for all the electric lights were cut off, with the exception of dark blue non-reflecting lights in the passage-ways and latrines. One of the first acts of the captain was to order all matches and flash lights gathered up — a wise precaution — and after dark no smoking was permitted on deck.

On the second day out the sea kicked up a bit, changing

from an azure blue to a bilious green, and most of those on board, including the crew, became violently seasick. It was then that the friction between the Army and the Navy was most marked. Ordered from the poorly ventilated, evil-smelling holes in which they were cooped, so that their quarters could be cleaned, the soldiers would mount the slippery iron steps to the main deck, only to be turned back by the naval guards posted at the hatchways. Or again, when the men were above, they might be ordered from the deck by the seamen, and forbidden to go below by their own officers. Indeed, it seemed at times that the only place they could go was overboard. One of the men put into verse the trials of the enlisted man on the *Grant,* and the portion here included is taken from an early edition of *The Wild Rose,* the regimental paper:

LIFE ON THE PRESIDENT GRANT

We wake at four in the morning
With the buglers raising Hell,
And the officers start a yelling,
Like they had garden truck to sell.
They yank off all your blankets,
And give your head a shove,
And bellow in your sleepy ear,
"Crawl out and get above."

Above we go to the cold dark deck;
It's as black as all get out.
There's such a mobbing crowd of us
That none can move about.
It's then the Naval officer
Yells, he'd like to know,
"What in Hell are you doing here?
You fellows get below."

We then start down the ladder,
The guard won't let us by.
When we try another,
A "three stripe" asks you why.
We sneak like thieves in alleys
In our bunks away to stow,
But we find a captain asking
"Who in Hell let you below?"

It's "get above" and "get below"
From dawn till late at night
Till a fellow's nearly bug-house,
And he's praying for a fight.

When the heads got out of order, no immediate attempt was made to repair them; instead, naval guards were posted to keep the soldiers out. In a short time the sanitary condition of the between decks became unspeakable. It is not to be wondered that under these conditions an epidemic of measles broke out on the fourth day. The sick bay was filled in a few hours, and remained full until the ship again reached port. In order to escape the fetid quarters allotted them, the men resorted to all manner of connivance to remain on deck at night, secreting themselves in life-boats, in the piles of baggage heaped about, or in any other shelter where they could avoid the vigilant eye of the sentry. Lieutenant Williams of the 168th Medical Detachment in a report stated: "This was without doubt the most unsanitary boat of ancient or modern times. The conditions were directly due to the colossal ignorance and inefficiency of the naval officers who refused to accept the advice of the competent army medical men on board."

However, there were some distractions. The convoy

was composed of seven transports carrying 17,000 soldiers; an armored cruiser, the *Seattle*; and two destroyers. It was fascinating to watch the destroyers cut in and out among the transports, like dolphins at play, and to follow their constant signaling with the cruiser. Then there was "Abandon Ship" drill. The purpose of this drill was to send the men rapidly and in good order to their assigned life-boat station on the main deck. Of course, it wasn't expected that they could unravel the tower of rafts piled on the deck in time to set them afloat if an emergency arose; but it was part of the regulations, and had to be gone through. The captain took particular delight in sounding the alarm when the men were eating, and all would have to leave their unfinished meal and make for the upper deck. If, in the meantime, the ship gave a lurch or two, they were likely to find, on their return, the chilly scraps of their repast combined in one large scramble on the deck.

Then again there were periods of gun practice when the wicked looking pieces spat out steel with marvelous accuracy at the targets towed in turn by the different ships in the convoy. After the first demonstration of the naval gunners' skill, the soldiers felt that there was little danger from submarines if the gunners sighted them first.

To guard against surprise by the U-boats, numerous lookouts were posted on deck, and a detail of officers was assigned to duty high up in the crow's nest. When the wind was blowing, and the ship rolling, the landsmen found it difficult to negotiate the swaying rope ladders leading to this lofty perch. On one occasion, a young lieutenant, who was struggling to ascend, hastily scattered the amused audience of enlisted men below by involuntarily answering the urge of a sorely tried

stomach. Lieutenant Heath Noble of Company I one day suffered such an acute attack of *mal de mer* that he couldn't come down, and was forced to stand, or rather cling, through several consecutive watches.

During the first twenty-four hours of the voyage we had averaged a fair rate of speed, but from then on there was a noticeable slowing up. Daily the pace lessened until it fell to four knots an hour, and by the 22nd the *Grant* had got but 880 miles from New York. She was now retarding the whole fleet. In spite of her unmistakable unseaworthiness, her officers, courageously enough, insisted on going on, calling for volunteers from among the soldiers when the reserve boilers were shoved into service. But eventually someone in authority became aware of the sheer folly of courting the disaster that lurked in the danger zone, for in her almost helpless condition, the ship would have been easy prey for any submarine, and her crowded hold a death-trap. That evening, as the sun was setting, the *Grant* swung slowly around, and headed due west. Soon the rest of the convoy became mere specks on the horizon, and night gradually hid them entirely from the view of several thousand disappointed Americans. A sudden apprehension seized the older members of the regiment. Was the experience of '98 to be repeated, when the regiment established a maritime record by remaining (involuntarily) on the transport *Pennsylvania* for ninety days, without once setting foot on land?

Concurrent with the outbreak of measles was a far more infectious epidemic which some wag chose to name "Rumor-tism". Few of the enlisted men understood why the ship had turned back, and there were any number of explanations for the change in course: they were going

to Cuba for training; there was a fire in the hold; the war was over; and, the choicest bit of all, England had declared war on the United States. Despite the utter absurdity of all of these rumors, each found supporters, and it was not until the men were back on land that many could be convinced that their pet rumor was incorrect.

With the change in direction there was a general betterment in the conditions on board, due in no small part to the efforts of Colonel Bennett. The ship canteen, unaccountably kept closed until now, was opened to furnish some relief from the mess, which, however, was beginning to show signs of improvement.

In spite of the protests, or rather reluctant permission of the Captain, the Band was ordered to play for the soldiers, and some of the "pep" which they had lost when they found that they were returning to port was restored. A hose, shooting a stinging spray of salt water, was arranged on deck so that the naked men could rush under and remove some of the dirt that had been accumulating since they left the civilized world.

The return was made over smooth seas and in lazy, balmy weather. When the troops awakened at five o'clock on the morning of the 27th, there were lights on the port side and the ship was at anchor. Later it proceeded a short way and again dropped anchor at eight o'clock outside the Narrows. Before it moved up the harbor every one, men and officers, was ordered below. All the troops must keep out of sight so that the enemy might not learn of the misfortune and gloat — at least that was the only explanation we could evolve.

Like a thief in the night, only that it was daytime, the *Grant* glided past Liberty, and at three in the afternoon, shamefacedly poked her nose into her berthing space in

Hoboken. Within an hour unloading was commenced, but it was a slow process as but one gang-plank was set ashore. However, the ship was emptied of troops by half past six, and after hanging around the pier for an hour or so, the regiment loaded on ferries. The trip on the *Grant* was over!

IV

BACK AT CAMP MILLS

During the time that the regiment was on the water a storm had hit New York and left Camp Mills in such a condition that only two battalions could be accommodated, so the Second Battalion and the Machine Gun Company were ordered to proceed to Governor's Island.

When the men of the other two battalions landed hungry at Long Island City they were met by a cheerful, busy group of Red Cross workers who saw to it that every one got a sandwich and a cup of good hot coffee. A carefully chosen dinner at the Ritz would not have tasted better to these sea-weary travelers.

At ten o'clock they boarded the trains that were to carry them back to Mills and soon were off. They were followed all the way to Garden City by a wind-whipped, chilling rain, which, upon their arrival at about half past eleven, increased to the proportions of a cloud-burst. The storm of two days previous had blown down many of the old tents and had filled the low places with water, and that devastation was increased a hundred-fold by this tremendous downpour which soaked every one to the skin. From appearances, as revealed by lightning flashes, the *Grant* might just as well have docked at Camp Mills. It was an expanse of turbulent water, with tents submerged and flapping like derelicts adrift; more were down than up, and wind and rain were driving through the few that had weathered the storm.

As there was shelter — and that questionable — for but a small percentage of the command, permission was given the men to find cover wherever they could. Alabama took care of a number, and some found a dry corner in the Y tent, but the large majority sought refuge in Hempstead. Although early in the morning, this village responded to the S. O. S. and opened the courthouse and other public buildings to the men, who crowded in and slept on the bare floors. The overflow was sheltered in private homes. The few who elected to stay at camp put in a miserable night with wet blankets and what cots they could salvage.

The next morning, which was Sunday, broke to find on Hempstead Plain several hundred shivering, rain-soaked, mud-bespattered men awaiting a breakfast that was not there. The kitchens were still on the boat. During the night the Georgia Machine Gun Battalion had moved out, and the last of the Division had its sailing orders.

It was then that we found out what friends we had in Alabama. They had only enough rations for themselves — but Iowa was next door and hungry. An invitation was immediately rushed over for each company in the 168th to report to the corresponding letter company in the 167th for breakfast. All day Sunday the Alabama regiment fed us, and planned to furnish our meals until the arrival of our stoves and kitchen equipment, which, fortunately for them, came late that night.

At Governor's Island the Second Battalion and the Machine Gun Company found a similar condition — a mud hole and tents in bad shape. But in a few days things looked brighter, although the measles, which had broken out on the *Grant,* became so prevalent as to order first a detachment into quarantine and finally the entire

battalion. The Machine Gun Company escaped, however, by being ordered on the 31st to Camp Merritt on the Jersey side of the river. The others, segregated in the middle of New York harbor, were as well as imprisoned. So close to New York with its infinity of diversion that they could almost throw a stone across, they were forced to eye it longingly and keep to their own side of the channel.

After we got settled the second occupation of Camp Mills was more comfortable than the first. The weather was colder, especially in the night and early morning when the ground was white with frost and water froze in the buckets, but small Sibley stoves were issued for each tent and they helped to drive away the chill. On the 29th the 165th left, and we policed their camp for flooring, tables, and other articles of comfort, having previously cleaned up the Ohio and Georgia camps. Alabama and Iowa were now the only Rainbow organizations in Mills. On the 1st of November an Oregon regiment, the vanguard of the 41st Division, moved into the Ohio camp, and after the 6th, when the last of the 167th departed, we were completely surrounded by National Guardsmen of the Far West.

Upon orders from the War Department, all the records and the equipment which had been shipped on the *Grant* were left aboard while the ship was being overhauled. This necessitated the re-equipping and re-recording of the regiment, but the work was attacked so diligently that what had previously taken six weeks was now accomplished in two.

The preliminaries to departure were now repeated; the freight and baggage went first; then came the order for the movement of the troops. The packs and bedding

rolls were made up in the late afternoon of the 13th in anticipation of an early start the next morning. No one went to bed, but, as it was very cold, all spent the night huddled around the blazing stoves.

V

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

Long before daylight the troops were called and served sandwiches and coffee. The First Battalion, Headquarters Company, and Supply Company slipped out of camp unnoticed before four o'clock, and the Third followed soon after. Just before leaving, the order to furl tents had been given. Many of the stoves were still red-hot, and the inevitable happened. As the troops marched out in the darkness their way was lighted by a succession of burning tents. This display was the cause for a lengthy investigation some months later in France; but as there seemed at the time to be a general ignorance of the matter, the investigating officer, who had traveled all the way from Chaumont to Jeanménil, was forced to drop the matter. In all cases where responsibility and accountability for government property was in question, a convenient memory was the easiest and most economical solution.

Again the regiment entrained for Long Island City, transferring there to ferries and sailing around the tip of Manhattan. But this time it made for the Chelsea docks on the New York side of the river, the first detachment debarking at the Cunard piers where they boarded the *R. M. S. Aurania,* and the Third Battalion making for Pier 60 and the *R. M. S. Celtic* of the White Star Line. In the middle of the afternoon both boats left their docks, sailed down the river past Liberty again, and anchored

in the lower bay. After dark they headed out into the ocean.

These vessels were far superior to the *Grant* in every respect. The men were not packed in like sardines, they were allowed the freedom of the decks, and they had all the fresh air they wanted. But soldiers have to kick at something; so on this trip they kicked at the food, which really wasn't very appetizing and not prepared in the manner in which they would have had it. But one could not expect everything; compared with the previous experience, we were traveling de luxe.

About noon on the second day out land was sighted, and the ships soon pulled into the mine-protected harbor of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Past the giant camouflaged *Olympic,* which was loading Canadian troops, they moved on up into the inner harbor, Bedford Basin. Here they were to wait until the convoy of which they were to be a part assembled. As it was very cold, no one was permitted ashore, so the chief diversion was exercising briskly on the deck and wishing to land.

At midday on Sunday, the 18th of November — a clear, beautiful day — the convoy, consisting of the *Celtic, Cedric, Aurania,* several freighters, and a British armored cruiser, moved slowly down the Basin and out of the harbor in single file, the *Celtic* last. On the north shore an American flag flying from a cabin on the water's edge caught the eye, and as we steamed past, quite close, it seemed, a young woman climbed to the roof and signaled by semaphore, "Good Luck; God Bless you"— the last message we had from any of our countrymen. Some three thousand pairs of hands waved back in appreciation and farewell.

Still gliding slowly out, the convoy neared two British

men-of-war whose crews were dressed up along the rail, and who gave three mighty cheers for the American Army as the outgoing vessels came abreast. Then a band on one of them broke out into *The Star Spangled Banner*. Every one in the convoy stiffened to attention, and thrills chased each other up and down the back as they moved silently past. Some even admitted to a bulge in the throat. Farther out, as the convoy began to gather speed, the band changed its tune, and the faint strains of *Over There* sounded out across the water. It was a wonderful, inspiring send-off that left us all with a warm spot in our hearts for the English. It made us feel as if we were something more than just allies joined together to fight a common enemy — that we were brothers after all. For an hour or so all stayed on deck, straining to catch the last glimpse of America and wondering if we should ever see it again.

For ten days the convoy headed eastward. Every afternoon there was a period of physical drill on the deck, and aside from an occasional "Abandon Ship" drill and the details for submarine lookout, the men had much of the time to themselves. The Band, which was with the Headquarters Company on the *Aurania*, gave daily concerts — a pleasure that was denied the men on the outward-bound voyage of the *Grant*.

On the 22nd the convoy ran into a gale which caused the boats to roll and pitch so that during physical drill the men were unable to keep their footing and tumbled all over the deck. No one got very sick, and the majority enjoyed the experience. Viewed from the *Celtic*, the *Aurania* seemed to bob up and down like a cork, but her own passengers were too busy holding on to support to give much time to the oscillations and gyrations of the rest.

The danger zone was reached on the 25th, and from then on neither lights nor music were permitted, and all were forbidden to undress at night or to lose sight of their life-preservers, which became as omnipresent as one's shadow. At this time the undersea boats were unusually active in northern waters, and the submarine guard was doubled. There was little desire to be *spurlos versenkt,* and therefore a vigilant watch was maintained. The next day, because the escort had failed to appear, the convoy changed its course and headed almost due north, and it was reported the following afternoon that we were not far from Iceland. It was drizzling and the sea was running high, and when at four o'clock the escort had not yet arrived, the fleet separated, the transports going ahead full speed and leaving the slower boats behind to take their chances with the submarines.

All night long the ships raced toward port. There was such a heavy fog the next morning that it was difficult to make out the other vessels, and that lessened the chances of attack. Toward noon the fog lifted, and shortly after lunch a loud cheer announced the arrival of the belated convoy of four swift, lean destroyers — three English and one American. Within an hour land was sighted.

There was considerable excitement coming through the mine barrage into the narrow northern entrance to the Irish Sea. What appeared to be a periscope bobbed up between the *Celtic* and the *Aurania,* which were running abreast not more than five hundred yards apart. The *Aurania* immediately opened fire, and for the moment those in the *Celtic* felt more in danger of her shells than of a torpedo. But on the whole the soldiers displayed more interest in the submarine than fear of it, for instead of rushing to their life-boat positions they gathered at

the rail to see what was going to happen. One youth expressed his unconcern with "Let 'em sink the ship. It ain't mine." Whatever the supposed U-boat really was, it disappeared instantly. The convoy, in the meantime having been warned of the presence of submarines in the Irish Sea, instead of making for Liverpool, put on all steam for Belfast, the nearest harbor, where we dropped anchor at seven o'clock that evening.

It was in this Ulster harbor that the *Celtic* and *Aurania* lay until the 30th, and it was aboard English boats in Irish waters that the men from Iowa spent the great American feast day of Thanksgiving in the year 1917. In the morning a freighter from our convoy limped into port, mast and funnel gone, stern low in the water, but withal a victor in an unequal battle with a submarine. That gave the men something to be thankful for. The spirit of the day, however, was somewhat dampened by the quality of the alleged banquet that was set before the soldiers. According to the men of the Third Battalion, sea gull was the chief article on the menu; while on the *Aurania* the soldiers vehemently protested against the fare of spoiled meat and rabbit, and in mob formation marched upon the mess hall demanding something fit to eat. In no time a well-formed mutiny against the English officers and crew was raging away in the lower decks. The American officers, who at the time were at their own dinner, rushed to the scene of the disorder and quieted their men, after insisting that they be given a palatable meal.

The two ships left Belfast harbor about one o'clock on the afternoon of the 30th in a mist and a choppy sea, which by night became as smooth as a mirror. And then a brilliant moon made matters more interesting. There

were wild rumors of floating mines and of submarines at large, and the dash across the Channel was made at full speed — a roaring trip.

It was a great relief to see the blinking lights of the Mersey heave into view, and to cross the bar and mine barrage just about midnight. We anchored in the river about two o'clock of the morning of December 1st.

There had been an outbreak of scarlet fever on the *Celtic* a few days previous, and while we were in mid-channel, racing for the safety of Liverpool, Private Earl Coons of Company K died. When the sanitary inspectors boarded the boat early in the morning, they were dubious about permitting the battalion to land, and the prospect of a long period of quarantine on shipboard stared us in the face. However, the inspectors relented, agreeing to send all the affected men to hospitals in the city. And it was here that Private Coons, the first man of the 168th to die in Europe, was buried with all military honors.

VI

THE REGIMENT ARRIVES IN ENGLAND

A STEADY, penetrating rain was falling as the men filed down the gang-planks and set foot for the first time on English soil. A ruddy English Bobby, directing the traffic on the landing quai, was the sole committee that welcomed the regiment, dampened in spirit as well as in body. "Plenty of work for you boys, and for ours", was his shouted greeting. "You know that Russia has made peace with Germany." The news fell on the Americans like a cold douche. But it was too true. While we were on the water the former ally of France was entering into negotiations which were to result in the shameful treaty of Brest-Litovsk. A depression, almost as tangible as the mist, descended upon us as we waited in the dreary terminal for the trains that were to take us southward.

With the arrival of the toy-like coaches and the diminutive engines the lagging spirits rose. The men had found something to laugh at: they had not seen anything so amusing in weeks. But after they were all loaded and the tiny engine gave a snort and the driver tooted the undersized whistle, the derision at the pigmy equipment changed to admiration; for the trains sped along smoothly, as fast as any American express.

As quickly as the trains could be made ready they were dispatched with their loads of soldiers. Owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the port officials as to the number of men to expect there was some delay, and

the last detachment did not leave Liverpool until after dark. Unfortunately, very little of the interesting country through which they passed was seen by the Iowans. There was a short halt at Birmingham while English Red Cross girls furnished coffee. After an eight-hour ride in the chilly coaches, the regiment detrained at Winchester and marched through the silent, moonlit town to Camps Morn Hill and Winnal Down, several miles beyond.

Here there was another misunderstanding, and the men waited around until nearly dawn, whipped by a wintry wind that chilled them to the bone, before they were assigned to their barracks.

For a week they were kept at Winchester. Most of the time it was cold, rainy, and dismal. Four extra blankets were issued to each man, a provision necessitated by the summery type of barrack, and by the fact that there was not sufficient fuel to supply the tiny stoves. The rations were English — jam, hard-tack, cheese, and tea. If there is anything alien to the appetite of the American soldier it is a diet of jam, hard-tack, cheese, and — tea. But the issue was so slender, as the days went by, that they finally got to the point of disposing of every drop and crumb with apparent relish. Then, to add to the unpleasantness of the situation, scarlet fever broke out anew and several barracks were quarantined, while the severe cases were sent off to the hospital. The only bright spot in camp was the Y. M. C. A., which offered an occasional program of singing and vaudeville and a place for the men to sit and read or to write letters.

Winchester, in times of peace a fascinating old town, was, in the shadow of war, the epitome of gloominess — particularly at night in the rain, when the streets were so

dark that one could hardly find his way around. Even the lights in the Cathedral were shaded so as to cast no reflection upward, and a minimum downward, turning the lofty nave into a dark cavern so huge that it seemed to lack dimensions. The drab women workers, and the worried-looking people that one saw on every hand added to the general atmosphere of cheerlessness and hopelessness. Food was so scarce that nothing satisfying could be bought. All England was on a strict ration, for it was at this time that the submarines were most seriously menacing her food supply.

However, the medieval Cathedral with its historic relics and associations aroused the respect, if not the admiration, of the youthful sightseers from the Middle West. Venerable Winchester College, and the alleged Round Table of King Arthur that hung in its great hall, commanded their interested attention, although one skeptic was heard to remark that he would bet a dollar that the storied table was made in a Jersey City antique shop.

But withal they were a hungry, cold, dejected, homesick lot, and there was little regret when word came that they were to leave for France. On the 8th of December the regiment, minus the Band, which was quarantined by itself in an isolation camp on account of an outbreak of spinal meningitis, and a number still suffering with scarlet fever, entrained for Southampton, and by noon they were all deposited on the quai ready for the next move. There was a long delay while arrangements were being made for loading on the boats, but the men found diversion in watching attendants transferring to the hospital train a large convoy of seriously wounded

Britishers, fresh from the battle at Cambrai — an operation which, of course, cheered everyone immensely.

The accommodations on the cross-channel boats were nothing to boast of, as they had been used for carrying cattle and smelled like it. But the dash across in the dead of night was made on an unusually smooth sea, and all those who could find space in which to lie down slept all the way across.

VII

FRANCE AT LAST

Early in the morning on the 9th of December the three speedy ships, the *Prince George,* the *Marguerite,* and the *Southwestern Miller,* arrived at Le Havre and moved up the estuary to the landing stage. France and the weather had prepared no more kindly reception than England had offered. The two battalions were formed up on the dock and marched off in a cold drizzle to what some persons with a depraved sense of humor had designated Rest Camp Number Two, several kilometers away.

Here the men were assigned to open sheds with cobblestone floors which afforded only partial shelter from the cold wind and continuous rain. At night they were herded, twenty-one in each, into small, muddy, conical tents which were meant to accommodate six at the most. There were thousands of troops in the camp area representing every Allied army: Serbs and Russians, who had escaped by way of Archangel, and who were in deplorable condition; Portuguese, Italians, Hindus, and Belgians — a bewildering array of uniforms. Not far away was a large camp of German prisoners who were passing away the time at manual labor. It gave the newcomers no end of thrill to see these be-spectacled, sloppily-uniformed captives, with a large P. G. (*prisonnier de guerre*) painted on their backs. With monotonous regularity, trains carrying wounded from the fiercely contested battle around Cambrai passed through the camp.

It was here that the men first met and appreciated the Salvation Army. The English lassies served coffee and tea and buns for a penny, and those who were out of funds — and that included the large majority, for the regiment had not had a pay day for several months — were lined up and presented with the food. The hut was kept open all night and warmed by blazing coal fires, so that many deserted their dismal tents for the floors, tables, and counters where they could sleep in comparative comfort.

On the 10th at midnight the first train load of Iowans left Le Havre for a destination unknown. The other detachments followed at intervals of an hour, so that by five o'clock in the morning they were all speeding up the valley of the Seine toward Rouen and Paris. It was a bitterly cold night, and in the unheated coaches there was much actual suffering. Crowded ten in a compartment, there was no room to lie down, and for thirty hours the men had to sit bolt upright and be content with what sleep they could snatch in that position.

The weather cleared, however, and the frosty landscape with its occasional canal, its tree-lined highways, and many spires was cheering, and there were many novel and picturesque sights to draw the attention from the discomforts of the trip. Twice in the day the trains stopped while hot coffee, weakly diluted with rum of questionable quality, was served the men from the station canteens. During these short halts they had a chance to stretch their legs and temporarily remove the kinks from their bodies. The puffing engines pulled their convoys through Rouen, Mantes, Versailles, and then instead of turning into Paris, headed almost due south.

VIII

RIMAUCOURT

In the early hours of the 12th of December the trains bearing the First and Third Battalions and the Headquarters and Supply Companies chugged into the village of Rimaucourt, in the department of the Haute-Marne, and pulled up with a jerk on the sidings to await daylight. But before the men were awake, or realized that their journey was at an end, an American officer was walking along, opening compartment doors, eagerly searching the interiors with a flash-light.

It was no one less than Lieutenant Colonel Tinley, marooned in France without command since the 5th of October. He had been sent ahead to prepare the way for the regiment, and had been on hand to welcome it when the first convoy arrived at St. Nazaire. He was the most disappointed man in France when he learned that the 168th had been forced to return to port. Now he could not wait for morning to look upon some good old familiar Iowa faces.

After several weeks' idle stay in Le Havre, the Colonel had been ordered to Vannes-le-Chatel, in the Vaucouleurs area, where he proceeded to annex a staff. Here reported to him, as sole representative of the regiment, Lieutenant Léon Bentz, a young French officer who was to prove of inestimable value to the 168th in his capacity as Liaison Officer; Interpreter Ogier, who was to make the rough road of French orders easier for us; and thirty reserve officers.

These thirty officers, graduates of the first training camps, had landed early in October, and had been attending a French army school at La Valbonne. Of remarkably high calibre — capable, alert, courageous — they were to leave a deep impress upon the regiment and to make a heavy sacrifice for it. Of the twenty-seven who remained with it, seven — Lieutenants Irwin, McIlvaine, Priddy, Schaefer, Timothy, Van't Hof, and Wells — were to give their lives in the service of the 168th, and fourteen others were to leave its battle fields wounded.

It had been the intention to concentrate the entire Rainbow Division in the vicinity of Vaucouleurs, but on the 8th of December Colonel Tinley was directed to proceed with his platoon of officers to Rimaucourt to arrange for the billeting of the main body of the regiment and for the Headquarters of the 84th Brigade. That was the task, not over-fatiguing, which had occupied them until the arrival of the troops.

At half past seven the travelers descended from their chilly coaches and marched under the direction of the new officers to their billets in the village a few hundred yards away.

Rimaucourt, situated twenty-three kilometers north of Chaumont, the seat of American General Headquarters, was a picturesque little town of 1100 inhabitants, run very much as it was three hundred years before. The one long street with its several short branches was lined with substantial stone houses, built flush with the sidewalk, that seemed as old as the ground from which they appeared to have sprung. They gave one the impression of having always been there.

Everything about the place struck the Americans as quaint, unmodern, and strange — the women and children

clattering about in their wooden *sabots,* and their queer dress; the town crier, with his busy drum and drone; the manner in which the housewives pounded their clothes in the icy water, tongues and paddles all going together; even the bread, baked in unfamiliar shape, like huge doughnuts, through which one thrust the arm when carrying it from the bakery to the home; the dark-eyed mademoiselles; the bare, yet cosy, cafés; and the swiftly spoken, musical language. But what first impressed itself upon one was the absence of able-bodied men. Except for one or two home *en permission,* they were all in the army fighting the Boches.

The château (nearly every French village boasts of one) was an unpretentious affair surrounded by a lovely, walled-in *parc.* It was formerly owned by the Ducs Decrès, the last of whom had served in the American Revolution under the orders of the Admiral de Grasse. It had since fallen into the hands of a local iron manufacturer.

Rimaucourt, which seemed old to the Iowans, was but an upstart compared to the ancient village of Andelot, two kilometers to the south. Here, in the year 857, Childebert II, King of Austrasia, made a treaty with Gontran, King of Burgundy. It was into this atmosphere of antiquity that these youths of the Mid-West, whose entire history could be included in the span of one brief century, were suddenly transplanted.

On the 15th of December the Second Battalion and the Machine Gun Company arrived at Langres to the south of Rimaucourt. They had left New York on the 23rd of November aboard the *S. S. Baltic,* and had followed the course of the other two battalions. They had cleared Halifax just in time to miss the terrific explosion that

wrecked the city, had spent Thanksgiving Day in mid-ocean, and had landed in England the day the rest of the regiment was leaving. After a short stay at Morn Hill they embarked for Le Havre, reaching France on the 13th.

Battalion Headquarters and H Company were billeted in the Turenne Barracks in the city; G Company at Fort de Peigney, two kilometers to the northeast; and the Machine Gun Company, and E and F at St. Geosmes, three kilometers south.

The atmosphere of this district, too, was hardly of the twentieth century. Langres, perched high up on its plateau, like an eagle in a tree top, was one of France's most interesting and venerable towns. It was old, and had a history as the capital of the Lingones long before the Roman conquest. Scores of its houses had endured for centuries, and it offered many delightful examples of medieval architecture. Its lofty promontory overlooks to the east the valley of the Marne, near its source; and to the west, one of its tributaries. In clear weather Mont Blanc, although 160 miles distant, is visible. St. Geosmes was of more humble character, but none the less interesting to the newcomers.

The period from the middle of December to early February was one of bitter hardship and suffering for the men of the Rainbow Division. At that time the American Expeditionary Forces consisted of four divisions — the 1st, 2nd, 26th, and 42nd. From these four on the 15th of January was created the American First Army Corps, an organization that lasted unchanged, for administrative purposes, until the 15th of July.

The winter of 1917-1918 was one of the severest on

record, and weather toward the latter part of December sent the mercury below zero and held it there. Owing to the youth and inexperience of the A. E. F., arrangements for the distribution of food and clothing were far from satisfactory. The enlisted men of the regiment were still wearing the light garrison shoes issued in September at Camp Mills; many of them had only summer underwear and no gloves; and half of them had but one pair of socks. Some had knit helmets, but regulations and orders from higher up forbade their wearing them. The ration was notable for its lack of variety, consisting for a long time solely of canned corn beef and hard-tack. In a country of deep snow and a damp, penetrating climate, the insufficient nourishment and cover proved particularly hard on the men; but they complained surprisingly little and made the best of what they had.

And the billets — ! The troops were distributed in sundry barns and attics, whose chief claim to merit was an unobstructed ventilation, so exposed to the wind and weather that often snow sifted in through the crevices and covered the men as they slept on their beds of straw. The not infrequent proximity to live stock did not enhance the attractiveness of the quarters, but the men laughed and jested about it just as they did about other unpleasant and unavoidable situations. Some companies were later fortunate enough to be transferred to Adrian barracks set up along the road. There was no wood for the tiny stoves with which some of the billets were provided, and someone remarked very much to the point, "At Valley Forge they at least had fire". In order to keep from freezing when in quarters the men walked around, and when they got tired of that they would go to bed (two blankets and a pile of straw) to keep warm.

It seemed that the shoes were always wet, and they generally froze at night so that it was necessary to thaw them out in the morning before they could be put on.

As there were no mess shacks, the meals had to be taken out of doors, and often the food froze in the metal mess kits before it could be eaten. Altogether it was an unenviable experience.

On the other hand, the French appreciated the difficulties of the Iowans and were only too anxious to do anything that would make it easier. These were the first Americans that Rimaucourt had ever seen, and it opened its heart to them. In the evenings the soldiers could usually find some hospitable French fireplace to huddle around until the call to quarters, and the cafés were open and popular. Given a piano, a warm fire, a little wine served by a smiling mademoiselle, and they could forget all about the polar accommodations to which they must return in an hour or so.

On the 14th Rimaucourt was quarantined because of a new outbreak of scarlet fever in the 168th. No troops from other towns were permitted to enter, and those stationed there were forbidden to leave, except to procure absolutely necessary supplies; and guards were posted to see that the quarantine was not violated. For a short period they were practically cut off from the outside world. All those exposed to infection, as well as those who had actually contracted the disease, were isolated — a single case causing an entire platoon to be shut off.

As if one epidemic were not enough, there were numerous cases of mumps and pneumonia (from exposure), an occasional case of measles, and several of meningitis. The worst cases of scarlet fever were taken to the base hospital at Neufchâteau, and the mumps and pneumonia

patients to Base 15 at Chaumont, where there were better facilities for handling them. During this period ten men of the 168th died in these two hospitals. The regiment was experiencing the trials of Job, but its medical force was efficient and soon had the situation under control.

On account of this sickness a contemplated move to the Rolampont area was cancelled, and the troops remained in Rimaucourt long after the rest of the Division had passed on through.

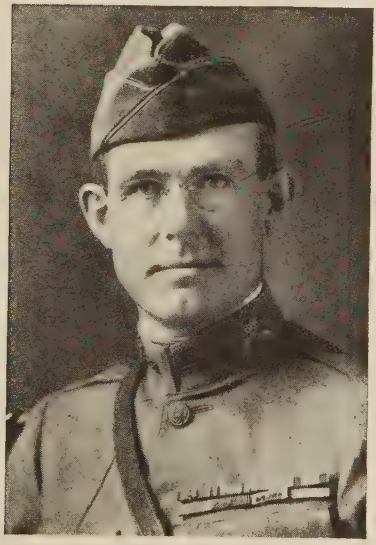
A field about half a mile from the village, next to the parish cemetery on the Neufchâteau road, was set aside for the training of the two battalions stationed at Rimaucourt. As soon as the troops had recuperated from their long journey a new schedule went into effect — reveille at 5:45, before dawn, while the stars were still shining and the villagers still asleep; drill twice a day, morning and afternoon, on the bitterly cold, wind-swept field, on and in snow; an occasional practice hike; and many lectures and exercises to acquaint the command with the new weapons with which they were to be equipped. The training in the specialties was under the supervision of Lieutenant Bentz, Lieutenant Georges Germain, another French officer who joined the regiment after its arrival in Rimaucourt, and the officers who had taken the course at La Valbonne. Here the men saw for the first time the Chauchat automatic rifle, and learned how to demount and assemble it as well as to fire it; here they learned how to handle and throw grenades, although no live ammunition was issued; how to adjust the newly issued gas masks in six seconds; and how to execute the latest open order formations which had been adopted by the staff of the A. E. F.

A range was constructed close to town both for rifle and

LT. COL. GUY S. BREWER

MAJOR GLENN C. HAYNES

LT. COL. CLAUDE M. STANLEY



MAJOR LLOYD D. ROSS

ABANDON SHIP DRILL ON THE GRANT

RAINBOW TROOPS MARCHING THROUGH RIMAUCOURT DECEMBER, 1917

automatic rifle practice, but in the piercing cold the hands became so numb that one could scarcely hold on to the gun, and not a great deal could be accomplished. A trench system for later use was dug, but the regiment moved away before it could take advantage of it.

The men suffered terribly, drilling out in the open. They were generally chilled to the bone and always got their feet wet tramping in the damp snow, and there was no way to dry them. But in spite of the inadequate footwear, orders from the Division insisted that everyone turn out for drill.

Late in December the Iowa regiment was treated to a pitiful spectacle: several organizations of the Rainbow marched through on their way to the permanent training area farther to the south. Because of the condition of their shoes, the feet of some of the soldiers had grown so sore that they could not wear any at all. Instead they wrapped them in burlap and rags, and marched on the sharp, icy roads with their heavy packs. Their condition was unbelievable — more than one Rainbow lad left marks of blood behind him in the frozen snow as he tried to keep up with the column. There was not a sufficient number of ambulances to pick up all the stragglers, and for days they wandered along the roads, trying to catch up with their outfits. Shortly after this there was an issue of new shoes to the Iowa regiment.

The Second Battalion also was having a bitter experience in the Langres area. Upon arrival it had been detailed to the commanding officer of the Army Candidates School to use as he saw fit, and, with the exception of some training in the use of automatic weapons which G Company received at Fort de Peigney, none of them were given any instruction whatsoever.

Most of the enlisted men of H Company were assigned as orderlies to the various offices and officers of the school — a duty which they thoroughly resented. E and F Companies, with the remainder of H, were employed as labor troops; and for a month they worked ten hours a day in the cutting wind that swept the plateau, laying out and digging trenches for the use of the students and performing such other tasks of manual labor as could be found for them. This was not the sort of war service for which they had volunteered, and moreover, they were being denied essential preparation for the greater task to come; but they knew it was useless to protest.

The director, who looked down upon all National Guardsmen as inferior beings requiring extraordinary methods of treatment, punished with severity the slightest infraction of rule or relaxation of effort. He disciplined one lieutenant because one day when the thermometer was trembling at zero that officer took his men out of the trenches and gave them ten minutes of exercise to restore circulation to their freezing hands and feet.

Like most of the billets in Rimaucourt, the long, draughty squad rooms in the Turenne Barracks and the quarters at the Fort and in St. Geosmes were provided with stoves of a kind, but there was no fuel for them; and the men were denied permission to get any from the numerous woods in the vicinity.

The Machine Gun Company was a bit more fortunate in the matter of training. Its guns (Hotchkiss model 1914) arrived early in January, and a divisional school was established at Beauchemin where the men learned to operate them.

The Stokes Mortar Platoon got its guns while at

Rimaucourt, and a detail was sent to the Divisional School of Fire at Chanoy to become familiar with the operation of the howitzer of the infantry. The Sanitary Detachment was given instruction for self-protection — bayonet drill and rifle and grenade practice — in addition to instruction in first aid work, especially in the use of the Thomas splint. The Band, too, started in on its work of first aid and litter-bearing, and was given some range practice with automatic side arms — a training that benefited them but little, as their guns were taken away from them as soon as they reached the front.

Many men had been assigned to the Signal Platoon by chance, and not because they had any particular aptitude or experience in telephone or line work; so it was necessary to scour the regiment for all the men who were qualified for the very important duty of maintaining its communications. Eventually twenty-six experienced linemen and telephone and telegraph operators were transferred from the line companies into this platoon, and their training was completed at the Divisional School at Lannes.

Every one in the regiment had his task assigned him and he went at it whole-heartedly. Gradually the novices learned to use their weapons, acquiring the knowledge necessary to fit soldiers for the exacting demands of the front.

The 168th had not been in France a week until the men began to think of the fast approaching Christmas season and the way in which to celebrate it. Far from home in a foreign land where they could not reach their own children with the spirit of Yuletide, the officers of the regiment decided at a meeting that the children of

Rimaucourt should know Christmas as it is known to Americans.

For four years this holiday had been meaningless to these good people of the Haute-Marne. The message of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men" was to them but a memory — and a hope.

At first it was planned to have an outdoor celebration, but rumors of an air raid toward Chaumont on the night of the 23rd caused this to be abandoned; and it was then decided to hold it in the church if the *curé* would permit. The mayor was asked to spread the invitation to the youngsters of the village by means of the town crier; a tree was to be enticed from the woods by some hokus-pokus, if possible; the fund for the presents was to be raised among the officers; and each child was to have a toy and a bag of candy.

The plan worked out perfectly. Madame Ulmo, the mistress of the château, agreed to furnish the tree from the *parc* that surrounded her home. The mayor endorsed the scheme enthusiastically and listed the children at 220 souls. And the *curé* — here it was felt that difficulty would be encountered — was the most enthusiastic of all.

Chaplain Robb, the indefatigable, set out to sift the entire *département* for toys, which were scarce enough, and for the candy, which was almost a *non-est*. But he proved a most excellent forager, and there was to be no disappointment for the children of Rimaucourt.

The parish church was of plain white plastered stone exterior, with an equally severe interior. The walls were a flat green, the pews stiff backed, and generations of devout worshippers had worn hollows in the flagstone floor. Throughout the years there had been a procession of baptisms, marriages, and funerals in this simple

edifice; but on Christmas eve in the year of our Lord 1917 it witnessed the most unusual ceremony it had ever known.

Such a celebration! Such a gala night! Instead of 220 children, there were twice that number — crowding, expectant, eager, their eyes sparkling, all aquiver with excitement, lips chattering, spick and span in their best clothes. Some of the neighboring villages had heard of the preparations, but that had been anticipated and provided for.

The tall, graceful tree, shimmering, fairy-like, was ablaze with light (the Signal Corps had furnished the wiring and bulbs), and the windows danced with the reflected colors. How the walls echoed and re-echoed with the music of the 168th's Band! When its repertory of American music was exhausted, it turned to that universal hymn, *Adeste Fideles,* and then to the *Marseillaise.*

The children then filed up to Santy (who was twins) for their presents, and accepted them with polite and whispered *mercis.* To add the bit of dignity that the opening of the church required, the old *curé* repeated a prayer, and a lesson was chanted. Then, in broken English, he tried to read a word of thanks, but the chatter of the youngsters drowned his voice, and about all the Americans heard to recognize was a quavery "God bless you all".

Cosmopolitan indeed was this celebration in a French Catholic Church, presided over by a French priest and an American Protestant Colonel, two Santa Clauses, Lieutenant George Cohen, a Jew, and Corporal Pat Ryan, an Irish Catholic; the Christmas tree, the gift of a

Jewess; and the whole directed by Chaplain Robb, a Protestant minister.

When the evening finally closed and the last notes of the *Star Spangled Banner* drifted out into the crisp air, the merry throng disbanded, the youngsters backing out reluctantly only at the firm persuasion of their mothers, to find a soft blanket of white snow covering the ground.

The night stillness was broken by the gay laughter of happy children and the tooting of bright new Christmas horns, gifts of *les bons américains.* Homeward they turned to dream of forests of fairy trees, bushels of toys, mountains of candy, and perhaps of whole regiments of smiling American soldiers.

Christmas dawned bitingly cold and clear, with the snow crunching cleanly under foot. But it was a hard time for many, to whom thoughts of dear ones gathered around the family table brought bitter pangs of home-sickness. The long-looked-for Christmas mail did not arrive, and that was a great disappointment; but, incredible as it seemed, there had been an issue of turkeys, with a supply of English walnuts, figs, and apples to fill out what seemed a menu of epicurean qualities.

On the 29th of December a group of officers was detached from the regiment to attend a British Corps School behind the lines in northern France, and on the second of January, the three majors, eight captains, thirty-six lieutenants, and twenty-seven sergeants (twelve of them from the Headquarters Company) were sent to the American First Army Corps School at Gondrecourt, Meuse. At the same time Colonel Bennett was ordered to Langres for examination, leaving Lieu-

tenant Colonel Tinley in command of the regiment, with many of the new officers who came to Rimaucourt with him in command of the companies.

Shortly after, Lieutenant James Thomas, who had started out from Iowa as a second lieutenant, was transferred to Division Headquarters, where, after a series of rapid and well-merited promotions, he became Division Adjutant, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel at the age of twenty-five and thereby winning the distinction of being the youngest officer of that rank in the American army.

The thermometer took a breath-taking drop the day that the detail arrived at the dreary, uninviting Gondrecourt school. All the officers, with the exception of the majors who were housed in cozy Swiss huts, were assigned to one long Adrian barrack, minus floor, visible means of heating, or water, but plentifully supplied with fresh air. The sergeants inherited similar quarters.

For the reserve officers the work was a repetition, with new frills, of their training camp experience. There was a severe schedule for five weeks, during which they drilled and exercised on fields alternately expanses of ice and seas of mud; and there was much rain and snow. The discomfort was great, but the hard work kept every one in good physical trim, and the food was excellent.

The school was divided into courses on tactics, grenades, auto-rifle, bayonet, and pistol, to which groups were assigned for a period of several weeks; and then there was general instruction for all in mapping, gas defense, and close order drill, with an English sergeant major as instructor. Majors shouldered a rifle and executed, rather badly at first, the manual of arms with the captains and lieutenants, and all engaged in refreshing exhibitions

of squads right and left. For the sergeants of the Headquarters Company there were the specialty schools for the pioneers, signalmen, Stokes mortars, and one pounders; and for every one there were innumerable lectures on innumerable subjects.

If the officers had been questioned as to the greatest advantage derived from this course of training, their unanimous answer would have been "the lectures of Lieutenant Colonel Hutchinson". This genial, witty officer of the English Regulars, a veteran of many campaigns and one of the first 100,000, gave the Americans the full benefit of his study and experience in this and other wars. He could make the driest lecture interesting by frequent recourse to his fund of wit, and he was a complete refutal of the myth that all Englishmen lack humor.

Illustrative of the necessity for a thorough knowledge of gas defense, he one day told of the predicament in which his brigadier general once found himself. This officer, on a tour of inspection with a sergeant, happened to sit down on a spot where the enemy had just dumped some mustard gas. Those who have been in the army know that this gas is not dangerous for any asphyxiating qualities, but for its power to cause painful burns, a fact which the general appreciated when the unnoticed liquid had eaten through his breeches.

"My God, Sergeant, what shall I do?" he exclaimed wildly.

"The regulations, Sir, provide for the immediate adjustment of the respirator in the presence of gas."

Certain studies not on the schedule included a course on light ballads, such as *Après La Guerre Finie* and *Mademoiselle From Armentières,* which somehow seemed

easier to memorize than the working parts of a Chauchat. And the most important events outside of the daily routine of study were the breaking of Captain Yates' cot, Lieutenant Gault's soliloquies while building the fire, Captain Haynes' charley horse, and the arrival of mail.

The picturesqueness of the village of Gondrecourt, with its fifteenth century tower and its winding streets, was lost when submerged under lakes of mud and slush. For the Americans, its greatest attraction was in the Y. M. C. A. and the Officers' Club — the latter a privately owned restaurant which had been transformed into a "club" by hanging out the sign *Café Américain*, draping a flag over the doorway, and raising the prices to a Paris level. There were comfortable Y huts at the school, too, for both officers and enlisted men, where one could spend what little time he had to himself in comparative ease listening to an occasional entertainment or simply reading by the side of a cheerful fire.

On the 17th of January there occurred a tragedy that threw the entire detachment into the deepest gloom. In the afternoon, during a practice trench raid, Lieutenant Scott McCormick of L Company was instantly killed by the accidental and unaccounted-for explosion of a bag of grenades which he was carrying. An excellent soldier, a popular comrade, and the first one to go — the first break in the big family — his death sobered and depressed them all. The next day the officers of the 168th were excused to attend his funeral in the quiet, peaceful cemetery in Gondrecourt. Chaplain Robb spoke feelingly of the fallen officer, and of his sacrifice, as real as if it had been on the battle field; taps were sounded, re-echoing in the hollow; and the friends of the dead soldier filed back to camp as silently as they had come.

On the 16th of January the Second Battalion moved into the area just west of Langres where the rest of the regiment was soon to join it, thus uniting the whole organization for the first time since it left the *Grant* in October. Battalion Headquarters and E and F Companies were settled at Perrancey, G and H at St. Ciergues, and the Machine Gun Company at St. Martin.

Toward the end of the month the other companies received the order to move. In spite of distressing experiences there, the men felt a genuine regret at leaving Rimaucourt. They had made many friends among the peasant French, who on their part had become attached to the gay young Americans. Schooled by three years of war, they knew what spring held for the youths whom they were wishing *Bonne Chance.* Three years had taught them more than they cared to know of anguish and sorrow, and they knew that many of those now departing would never again be seen in their little village.

So it was with tearful eyes that all Rimaucourt turned out on the frosty morning of the 31st of January to see the regiment leave with Colonel Tinley at the head and the Band playing a stirring march.

It was a severe test, that hike of fifty-four kilometers. The first day was clear and just below freezing. The roads were icy and rough, and after the first ten kilometers, when the packs began to cut into the shoulders unmercifully and the back began to bend under the unaccustomed burden, the men had to force themselves to keep up, but they all hung on grittily. On the road they were reviewed by General Liggett, the Corps Commander, who commented on the excellent formation and road discipline. But the endlessly perpendicular hill leading into Nogent-en-Bassigny almost finished them off, and

the wagon train had a particularly difficult struggle to make the grade.

Stiff and sore from the strain of a grilling 28-kilometer hike, the men made for their billets in Nogent-le-Bas and ripped off their shoes. There were few who did not have blistered feet, and there was not enough tape to go around.

At daylight the next morning they were eating breakfast, and by eight o'clock they were on the way again. It was much colder than the preceding day, and the roads were no better, but there were no stragglers. It was a splendid record. Before noon the column passed through Rolampont, the headquarters of the Division, and was reviewed by General Menoher, the Commanding Officer of the Rainbow. Afternoon saw them all in their stations.

Regimental Headquarters and the Supply and Headquarters Companies went into billets at Ormancey; the First Battalion at Beauchemin; K and I Companies at Mardor; and L and M at Voisines.

These small agricultural communities were enough alike to have been cut from the same pattern. The few streets, all rather muddy, radiating from a severely plain church; the houses of masonry, solid, practical, and unpretentious; and the quaint walled gardens, were typical of each. Before the war, when its men folk lived there, Ormancey, the seat of Regimental Headquarters, boasted of a population of 120; and the other villages were scarcely larger.

For two weeks the regiment remained in this area, working at top speed to round off its training. Several battalions of French had been assigned to aid the 42nd Division at this stage; and they proved efficient instructors, teaching our men the many practical things that they

themselves had learned from their experience at the front. Then there was a series of maneuvers with the 167th Infantry to accustom the officers and men to the tactics of attack and defense in open warfare, the type of fighting that it was hoped the coming of the Americans would enable the Allies to develop. There was range practice with automatic weapons, the rifle, the machine guns, and practice with live grenades. The Pioneers became adepts at trench and barbed wire construction under the French at Ormancey, while the men of the 37mm Platoon were at Chanoy improving their knowledge of their weapon. The regiment was fast approaching the termination of its long training period, and was soon to be declared ready to take its place in the battle line.

Here new clothing and equipment were issued — to each man, two pairs of stout hob-nails, two uniforms, plenty of socks, two gas masks, English and French, and last of all the steel helmet which put the picturesque and distinctive campaign hat into the discard.

On the 9th of February the Gondrecourt detail rejoined the regiment. Four days later K Company was detached from it and sent ahead to assist the Division Quartermaster in the new area where the 168th was to see its first war. A detachment under Captain Hupp was left at Lunéville, and sections were stationed in St. Clément and Baccarat, all in the Department of Meurthe-et-Moselle.

Upon his return from Gondrecourt, Captain Ross of M Company was placed in command of the First Battalion, as Major Worthington was temporarily retained at the school as instructor. But when it was learned that this battalion was to be the first to go into the line, Brigadier General Brown directed that Lieutenant Colonel Tinley

assume command, as he wished a higher ranking officer to be in charge. The latter took over the command on the 15th.

That day came the long awaited order to move to the trenches. At the same time all surplus clothing and equipment was put in barrack bags for storage in Rolampont, since it was the intention of the Division to return to that area after its first tour in the line; but that was the last that was ever seen of the barrack bags. The short period at Ormancey was the only time that the men of the 168th ever possessed two uniforms, and most of the time thereafter they had but one pair of shoes and a single suit of underwear.

At one o'clock the First Battalion moved out of Beauchemin and marched to Rolampont where the men were loaded into cars marked *Hommes 40 — Chevaux 8,* the famous side-door Pullmans that from then on served the enlisted men when they were fortunate enough to have rail transportation. After a cold, eighteen-hour ride that took them through Rimaucourt, Neufchâteau, and Mirecourt, the First Battalion arrived at Rambervillers, and marched fifteen kilometers to Deneuvre, an ancient suburb of the industrial town of Baccarat.

Regimental Headquarters, the Headquarters, Supply, and Machine Gun Companies left Rolampont early in the morning of the 17th and reached Gerbéviller about midnight. It was bitterly cold, and the men had suffered from the unheated cars; but they were kept standing in the open for two hours before they were ordered to march. At half past nine the next morning they trudged wearily into Baccarat. During the trip Private Andrew Reymer of the Headquarters Company fell from the train and both of his legs were severed below the knees.

He was rushed to the hospital at Neufchâteau; but he had suffered so from shock and loss of blood that he died there the next day.

On the 19th the Second Battalion arrived at Deneuvre, and on the 20th, the Third, which had detrained at Moyen, hiked a few kilometers up the hill from Baccarat into Badménil, a squalid, vile-smelling village which was promptly christened "Mudville".

IX

INTO THE LINE

"To-morrow, February 23rd, the 168th American Infantry will relieve in the trenches of the C. R. Chamois, twelve French half-sections . . . ."

So read Order No. 629 of the French 169th Infantry, an order of the utmost significance to the Iowa regiment, for it initiated the men into active service and introduced them to the unknown world of trench warfare. The period which followed was called a training period; but every member of the regiment, from K. P. to Colonel, felt that it was a testing period. Every one of them now realized that in a few days, at least, he was to be put on trial — tested as a man and as a soldier, tested for personal courage, and tested for military efficiency before the eyes of his comrades, which to him were the eyes of the world.

The glorious impulses of patriotism may rush a man to the defense of his country, and resolution may carry him into the front rank of active service; but when he faces the enemy for the first time his foremost thoughts, his most poignant sensations are of self — the acknowledgment that he has come to the critical and decisive moment of his life, and that upon the outcome depends, not only his reputation, but that kindling spark of self-respect upon which the fires of his future must feed. He learns then that the greatest danger is not in the enemy trenches opposite, but in his own breast, and a dreadful fear that he may not measure up to the standard

of his own hope, that he may betray the faith that others have placed in him, seizes him.

This is no unique problem. The personal crises faced by the men of the 168th as they first took their place beside their French brothers-in-arms have been faced by countless men in countless regiments since war began. Each soldier faces this crisis once, and faces it alone.

That the men of the 168th met successfully this most exacting of tests was not the result of individual bravery alone. It is to be remembered that every man in the organization was a volunteer, and of all the foundations upon which a soldier's training may be based there is none so promising of success as the spirit of the volunteer. In an army of conscripted men or professional soldiers some may start with this spirit, and some may acquire it, but in the Rainbow Division every man had it when the Division was first organized. It was not only that every man was a volunteer, but that he knew that every other man was a volunteer.

In the matter of leadership the regiment was most fortunate in having officers who knew the men under them. In many cases they had come from the same neighborhood, and there was between the commissioned and enlisted personnel not merely the formal, superficial relationship of command and obedience which suffices for garrison life, but that deeper bond of mutual confidence and understanding which arises from common interests and associations and which holds men together through the farthest trial of suffering, hardship, and danger.

There was snow in the air as the First Battalion hurried out to breakfast in the cold streets of Deneuvre at half past three in the morning of February 21st, and

CHAPLAIN HENRY W. STRICKLAND

CHAPLAIN ROSCOE C. HATCH

THE CHURCH AT RIMAUCOURT

CHAPLAIN WINFRED E. ROBB

THE 168TH ARRIVES IN ROLAMPONT FEBRUARY 1, 1918

NEUFMAISONS

as the column wound down the hill before sunrise and on through Baccarat on the first lap of its march to the front, a heavy snowstorm half obscured the softened outlines of houses and trees.

Without event, except for the intermittent rumble of guns that grew more distinct as they neared their destination, the vanguard of the regiment trudged along the country road that led to Neufmaisons. Already filled to overflowing with its own civilians and French and Italian soldiers, Neufmaisons offered a problem to the billeting officer; but somehow or other the Americans were stowed away in the amazingly elastic barns and lofts. The Machine Gun Company immediately set up an anti-aircraft gun in a small patch of evergreens on the hill just to the north, and at the first appearance of a plane let loose with a stream of bullets. The plane turned out to be an Allied machine, and fortunately, it being their first experience, their aim was not perfect.

The village was a feeding point for the lines of the sub-sector Pexonne, and a suppressed bustle and stir gave one the impression of direct communication with the trenches, although they were six kilometers distant. Over roads and paths soon to become as familiar as the main streets of their home towns, the first small groups of officers and non-coms made their way to the front to familiarize themselves with routes and positions.

Badonviller at that time gave little indication of the discomfort and danger that characterized life beyond its northern limits. The few hardy civilians who were courageously clinging to their *foyers* appeared freely in the streets — that is, the streets not under observation from enemy balloons — and small shops were open to purvey to the needs and appetites of the soldiers. With

the front line only 500 yards away, one gathered that it must truly be a quiet sector. But there was ample proof that it had not always been so. Scarcely a house was intact, though many were still habitable, and there was not a pane of glass in all Badonviller. Riddled walls, fallen tile, flapping shutters; loop-holed barricades screened with wire, and placed so as to command the north entrances to the town; the battered church, broken in structure, but not in dignity; and gaping interiors — the monuments to four years of martyrdom. By making use of the scattered stone from demolished buildings every cellar had been reinforced and converted into an *abri* for soldier and civilian in time of bombardment.

This little town with a pre-war population of a thousand inhabitants, three times captured by the Germans, and three times recaptured by the French, caught up among the threads of its ancient history a wandering strand which had been woven into the tapestry of the royal Austrian House of Hapsburg.

The municipal coat of arms still honors on its shield the two leaping salmon borne on the escutcheon of the Princes of Salm, who named the town for one Bodon, Bishop of Toul in the seventh century, and made it the seat of their feudal realm. In the course of time there was born a Christine of Salm who married François of Lorraine, receiving for her dowry a portion of land in the vicinity of Badonviller, including the site of the present village of Pierre Percée. Of this marriage was born Prince Nicolas-François, who became Emperor Francis I through his marriage with the Grand Duchess Maria Theresa, and so founded the present imperial house of Austria.

On a rocky crag east of town François built his feudal

castle, the picturesque ruins of which were visited by a few adventurous members of the 168th Infantry at an average cost of three dollars and thirty-odd cents, imposed as a fine by the Summary Court for the military offense of being absent without leave. The site was close to the front line and was used by the French as an artillery observation post, and, as it was closely watched by the enemy, the appearance of a single person on the summit called forth a shower of Boche shells.

Had they been Austrians who took the town on the 12th of August, 1914, they might not have pillaged and despoiled with such riotous delight the home of their Emperor's ancestors, but as it happened the invaders were Bavarians, quite as cruel and barbarous as their Prussian brothers, who, farther to the north, were making the word "German" anathema to the civilized world. The 2nd, 5th, 12th, and 16th Bavarian regiments came thundering in that August afternoon, the smoking ruins of Malgréjean Farm behind them; and claiming that the last shots of the retiring French soldiers had been fired by civilians, they proceeded to sack the town. Neither the terrified screams of children nor the piteous pleas of the helpless aroused their compassion or mercy. They burned to the ground the house in which the wounded still lay, forcing back into the flames those who tried to escape; they shot the mayor's wife and a score of others, including several children; they burned eighty-four houses and the church; tortured old men incapable of resistance; and pillaged and plundered ruthlessly throughout the town.

After two days of German occupation, the town was retaken by the French and eighteen of the enemy captured. A maddened populace demanded vengeance,

and their fate hung in the balance. But it was M. Benoit, the mayor, with the smoke still curling from the ruins of his home where lay the body of his murdered wife — he it was who protected the cringing captives and insisted that they should be saved from violence and treated as prisoners of war.

Germany decorated the Bavarian officer who was responsible for the bloody orgy of assassination and destruction; France decorated M. Benoit who strengthened the faith of his people and who curbed his desire for personal revenge in upholding the traditions of his country.

Again on the 23rd of August the Boches took the town and held it for nineteen days, removing, in the meantime, everything of value that had escaped the pillage. On the 21st of September it fell for the third time; but four days later the enemy, retreating before the *Chasseurs Alpins,* lost it for the duration of the war.

For its first month in the line the 168th was to confine its activities to the subdivision of the Baccarat sector called the C. R. (*centre de résistance*) Chamois, which owed its name to a ruined farmhouse whose shattered walls overlooked its shell-torn expanse. Heretofore this had been one of the quiet sectors of the Western Front, stationary since the battle of the Marne. At stated periods the Germans threw over a fixed quota of shells on the roads and on the town, a few on the front lines and communication trenches, and perhaps one or two on the artillery positions. So many rounds of machine gun ammunition were fired each day whether there was a target or not. Occasionally one side woke up sufficiently to make a raid on the other's position, but in the periods between there was a sort of armed truce, a gentleman's

agreement not to make the war too disagreeable. Here divisions came to rest and recuperate after the heavy fighting of more active fronts. The lines were lightly held as there was slight possibility of a general attack through that part of the country — the terrain was unfavorable and there was little strategic advantage to be gained by it.

The C. R. Chamois rested on the town of Badonviller, and extended fan-shaped through the two P. A.'s (*point d'appui*) or "strong points" to the four G. C.'s (*groupe de combat*). These four centers, joined by the *Grand Collecteur* trench, formed the front line of the Chamois sector. They were, roughly speaking, four loops of trench around the main defensive positions. Within each loop were dugouts for the men, the posts and trenches for its defense, and the P. C., or post of command, of the officer in charge. Each one of them was designated by a number and a name, which was whimsically derived from the key name of the sector — all being names of animals of the deer family.

The lines of administration ran from Regimental Headquarters at Pexonne to Battalion Headquarters at Badonviller, and thence to the company headquarters in the support trenches at P. A. 5, Colcombet, and P. A. 6, Malgréjean. Each company controlled two front line platoon positions; P. A. Colcombet was in charge of G. C. 9, Cerf, and G. C. 10, Chevreuil; and P. A. Malgréjean controlled G. C. 11, Daim, and G. C. 12, Isard.

At the time the 168th entered the trenches there were two platoons in each P. A. for the support of the two in the first line; two companies in Badonviller as battalion support; one battalion at Pexonne as regimental support, and the other at Neufmaisons in reserve.

Several trenches ran out between the walls of the buildings on the north side of Badonviller's main street connecting with the reserve position, the two principal links being the *Boyau Central,* which ran through P. A. Malgréjean, and the *Boyau de la Carrière,* through P. A. Colcombet.

When the first elements of the regiment filtered through the streets of Badonviller into the muddy ditches of the Chamois the French and the American soldiers experienced a relationship that was peculiar to the situation. The latter came as visitors, as pupils and successors-to-be. The French were our hosts and our instructors, and in performance of their rôle made our entry into the trenches as pleasant as the strain and uncertainty of the situation would permit. The enlisted men exchanged cigarettes, *pinard,* and broken phrases; while the American officers enjoyed the formal hospitality of the French officers' mess. They were impressed, not only by the excellence of the French plans for attack and defense, but by the skill with which a French cook could produce a delicate soufflé within range of the German guns. A cook under fire for the first time works with indifferent success, which changes after four years to successful indifference.

The French Staff had made a happy choice in the selection of instructors for the 168th. Colonel Allié, commander of the French 169th Infantry of the 128th Division, which was holding the sub-sector Pexonne, took a deep personal interest in both the instruction and the welfare of the Americans over whom he had temporary control; and the fact that he could speak English greatly facilitated matters at a time when the barrier of language was being keenly felt. But for his uniform he might have

been taken for a Yankee — tall, lithe, straight, soldierly, quick to think and to act. His sympathetic attitude and unfailing tact and courtesy will always be remembered with gratitude by his American friends. Major Legret, the Battalion Commander of the C. R. Chamois, gave most valuable and willing assistance to Lieutenant Colonel Tinley, commander of the First Battalion, in explaining the tactical dispositions and plans of defense governing the C. R. In fact, every French officer and soldier did his utmost to give the 168th the full benefit of information and friendly encouragement; and when the C. R. Chamois was finally and completely turned over to the First Battalion on the 28th of February, the Americans felt that they were well prepared for the task before them.

At reveille on the rainy morning of February 23rd certain elements of the First Battalion received orders to roll their packs, fill their canteens, provide themselves with extra bandoliers of ammunition, and to hold themselves in readiness to leave at a second's notice. At last, after months of anticipation, the great moment was at hand.

Promptly at half past eleven, under the direction of guides from the French 169th Infantry, one-half of A and C Companies and one quarter of B and D set out for the front. The main road was, of course, under enemy observation; so the column, marching by platoons at 200 yards distance, took a trail through the woods about a mile to the east. The heavy pack, plus extra rations and ammunition, and mud ankle-deep made the going difficult, particularly for those who toiled under the additional burden of the cumbersome Chauchat; but that was no time for complaint. The farther they got from

romance and the closer they approached the reality of the war, the more deeply were their thoughts concerned with the consequences of this new adventure. Some felt, as they trudged up over the hill beyond Neufmaisons and headed for the direction whence came that disturbing roar, that they had left the world behind them, that it was their farewell — that there would be no return — and for some few that first pilgrimage did turn out to be a farewell. But in most cases curiosity as to what it would all be like outweighed uncertainty as to the future.

In due course the column reached Badonviller, and the first detachments were soon slipping along the treacherous duckboards, cracking their helmets against the cross pieces that supported the narrow, winding, interminable communication trenches. Two half platoons of A Company, under Lieutenants Irwin and Bly, ended their journeys at G. C. 11 and 12, and two half platoons of C, commanded by Lieutenants Douglass and Silver, at G. C. 9 and 10 on the right of the sector. A platoon from each company was stationed at the P. A. in the support position, while the detachments from B and D remained in the town. A small detail from the Sanitary Detachment accompanied these trail-blazers, and four telephonists were assigned to the two P. A.'s, with the same number at the battalion post of command in Badonviller.

Upon the arrival of the Americans, half of the French in the front line posts moved out, leaving an equal number of French and Americans, so that each Iowan had a *poilu* for instructor. While the enlisted men stood post side by side with their allies, the officers were learning from the French officers the details of trench routine and the plans for defending the position against attack.

One learned later to laugh at the caution and discretion with which one went about his duties those first few days, but at the time the war was a thing to be treated with respect, and not to be taken lightly. All were experiencing sensations unfamiliar to the memory and not altogether pleasant. "We felt rather queer and empty at the stomach when we actually realized for the first time that there was need to kill or be killed. The idea of dispatching a man just because you saw him first was not refreshing", expressed the reaction of one of the pioneers to the new mode of life. None of our men wished to be the first seen, and hence the circumspection.

One peered furtively through concealed loop holes across tangled masses of rusty wire to a desolate reach of barren, shell-sown land, in appearance like a carelessly ploughed field converted into a dumping ground, extending out toward the horizon to the faint outline that was the Boche position — nowhere a sign of life or of movement, and not a sound. But one knew that behind those silent, outwardly lifeless trenches lurked potential death and misery.

Everything seemed utterly at variance with preconceived ideas of the battle line. Instead of a neatly revetted, geometrically plotted trench system, there was an irregular furrow that resembled a badly drained irrigation ditch. Loosened by erosion and shelling, the clay sides had here and there burst their retaining wall of withes and were sloughing down to the bottom of the trough. The posts were few, far between, and primitive; and the shallow dugouts damp, gloomy, and malodorous.

The American sections were relieved on February 25th by half platoons from B and D Companies under the command of Lieutenants Payette, H. G. Smith, Fraser,

and Spaulding, in G. C.'s 12, 11, 10, and 9 in the order named. On the same day Lieutenant Colonel Tinley established his headquarters in what came to be known as the "Pink Château", a fairly habitable house on Badonviller's main thoroughfare. Regimental Headquarters had been set up the day before in Pexonne.

On the 27th the remaining portions of the platoons represented in the lines came forward, and the French soldiers filed out, leaving the Americans as sole defenders of the Chamois sector. In each position one French officer stayed over for twenty-four hours to give any last assistance that might be required. By this time the remainder of the battalion had moved up; Captain McHenry had taken over P. A. 6, Captain Haynes was settled at P. A. 5, and the other two companies were billeted in Badonviller as reserve.

Gradually the different elements were introduced to the front, and before long the regiment had settled down to the new way of living as naturally as if it had never known any other. On the night of the 27th the Machine Gun Company arrived to relieve the French *mitrailleurs*. The first section of each platoon went into position first, enough of the French remaining to explain the duties connected with each post. These sections stayed in until the 2nd of March when they were supplanted by the second sections of their respective platoons, and on the 4th the last of the French machine gunners withdrew.

The Sanitary Detachment established its dressing station in a building in town and had representatives in each of the forward posts. Two crews from the Stokes Mortar Platoon had taken their place in the front line with the infantry; and in the first four days the signal men had strung nearly ten kilometers of wire in installing

the buzzerphone system in the trenches, and nearly as much in the phone communications between Regimental Headquarters in Pexonne and Battalion Headquarters in the Pink Château.

The Supply Company had taken for its station a camp in the woods near Neufmaisons called Village Indien or in English, Indian Village. Constant service and poor drainage had turned this into a malodorous spot; so the Supply Company, in addition to its regular duties of furnishing supplies and rations to the regiment, found it necessary to clean the camp from end to end — an Augean task — and to introduce a complete system of drainage. From this point the company ration carts made their nightly trips, dodging past exposed portions of the road and making good time past crossroads where the Germans were in the habit of shelling intermittently. In addition to the main base at Village Indien there was an office at Neufmaisons, and advance dumps at Pexonne and Badonviller.

Colonel Tinley assumed command of the Chamois sector at eight o'clock on the morning of February 28th, confident that his men were capable of handling any situation that might arise.

X

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

Men who thought they had roughed it found new items to add to their list of discomforts after making the acquaintance of the trenches. It was no more pleasant to wade through and stand in half frozen mud than it had been, back in Rimaucourt, to hike and drill on snow-covered ground in dilapidated light-weight shoes. A windy billet might be preferable to an air-tight dugout that dripped water onto the wretched bunks and thence to the flooded floor. It was not cheering to stand on post through the long watches of the night, rendered more miserable by the necessity of wearing shoes and clothing continuously wet, gas masks, and side arms. There were no rubber boots, no changes of shoes or socks, and the trenches were in many places knee-deep in mud and water. Long exposure to these conditions confirmed the belief that Hell is not a place of fire and brimstone, but of mud and water.

Each platoon maintained in its G. C. five or six posts, each held by four men, with two on duty at a time through the night. Each post boasted of a small shelter dug into the bank and covered with corrugated iron or strips of canvas and dirt, where its members slept and kept the equipment not in use. The rest of the garrison served as gas guards, runners, and reserves in case of attack, and slept in the dugouts to which all could repair during bombardment. In the daytime two or three guards served for the entire G. C.

The daily routine commenced with stand-to, beginning an hour before dawn and lasting until broad daylight. As this ominous hour approached, sergeants went about the posts waking up the men. The murky dugouts and shelters then disgorged their sleepy-eyed occupants, who slowly found their way to the alert stations where they waited in groups of four to find out whether or not the Boche had chosen that particular morning to attack.

Upon dismissal from stand-to, all thoughts turned to food. The mess detail never seemed speedy enough to suit the voracious appetites of the front line. After a seemingly interminable wait, someone would spy the perspiring detail winding up the communication trench, and at the magic word "Chow" all else was subordinated to the business of producing mess kits and fighting for an advantageous position at the point of distribution. Rare was the occasion when the innocent detail was not accused of everything from drinking up the coffee and "mooching" the sugar, to jettisoning the slum to ease the load.

The food was carried from the company kitchens in Badonviller to the line in large containers constructed on the principle of fireless cookers, called by the French *marmites*. With a stout pole passed through the handles, it took two men to negotiate one of them. Once in a while they managed to keep the meal lukewarm until it reached the consumer. Bread was brought up, uncut, in burlap sacks; butter in pails; and other articles in whatever receptacle was handiest. The menu was simple and invariable, the quality first-rate, and the quantity sufficient. It consisted of slum, that haphazard mélange of meat, vegetables, and whatnot; coffee with sugar and condensed milk; white bread, good butter, boiled rice,

molasses or jam; and once in a while, pudding of some sort.

Twice a day the details made the pilgrimage to the front line; often they were shelled, and at all times they had to contend with the slippery duckboards. If a shell happened to light too close, it was quite possible that the post for which that particular meal was destined might have to do without its coffee, and then there would be a barrage of malediction to face. For more reasons than one the mess detail was an unenvied and unsought-for job.

The supply of water was naturally limited, as it, too, had to be carried by hand from the rear; an infinitesimal amount had to serve the purposes of both drinking and ablution. By rare economy one learned to quench his thirst, bathe, shave, and still have a surplus on an amount that ordinarily would not suffice for a bird.

As soon as the meal was over, the details for the never-ending toil of repairing the damage caused by shell fire and the elements gathered up their picks, shovels, and pumps and set to work. There was work for every one, and a certain number of hours every day were devoted to the upkeep and improvement of the trenches. Between times all equipment was inspected and cleaned: Chauchats were dismounted and oiled; rifles worked over until the barrels shone like sunlight; grenades inspected for faulty caps and rust. There were daily inspections, too, of feet, gas masks, and ammunition by sergeants and the officer on the post. The rest of the day was spent catching up on sleep; reading, if there were papers available; writing letters, if one could scrape up the materials; airing the feet; and attempting to dry the shoes and socks. The men were not long in the trenches

before the great majority realized that they "had 'em". No one was immune; even the most fastidious were victims, and the business of shirt reading soon became one of the most popular and steadily pursued pastimes. Aside from these duties and diversions, there was little to do but keep out of sight and dodge the shells.

There was no time or occasion in the trenches for the observance of the formalities of military life behind the line: implicit and strict obedience to orders was all that was necessary. The officer in command of the post lived the same life, sharing the same food, the same bed, the same emotions, and the same dangers as his men. This intimate association brought out the true feeling of comradeship between subordinate and superior, and developed, instead of familiarity, an increased respect one for the other.

With the coming of night, life in each G. C. took on a sudden activity. Approaching dusk was the signal for evening stand-to, and again every man went to his emergency post, remaining there, ready for anything that might arise from the deepening shadow, until the danger of attack was past. Guards on post were now doubled, the men having four hours on and four off throughout the night; and the wire gates at the extremities of the posts were shut to prevent the ingress of intruders. Each was provided with a bell or some other device to warn the sentry in case they were touched.

The method of challenging in the dark, when it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe, was somewhat unorthodox. But if one were wise, he stopped short at a sudden low hiss, and gave the password; if it were the sergeant or the officer making one of the frequent rounds

during the night, it was enough to make himself known by name, so long as it were quickly done.

As soon as it was dark enough to escape detection from the enemy lines, the nightly wiring parties, protected by covering details, climbed out over the parapet and set to work. Combat and reconnoitering patrols, faces blacked, and armed to the teeth, filed out through the chicanes in the wire, and disappeared into the mysterious night.

At the entrance to the P. C. a guard is stationed to sound the alarm in the case of gas, and to prevent the entry of unauthorized persons. Below in the gloomy depths, faintly illuminated by a flickering candle, the officer is busy making out his reports, while the heavy breathing of the sleeping relief beats a steady cadence in the ear. From time to time a dark form descends to make a report or to deliver a message; sometimes it is a white, frightened face to warn of danger lurking beyond the wire, or it may be the leader of the hourly liaison patrol that keeps in touch with the adjoining posts, to say that all is well.

For the sentries on post the nights seemed ages long, and they were marked by inevitable scares and false alarms. A German patrol within a radius of five hundred yards never had occasion to feel neglected, and gas alarms averaged at least one a night for the first few weeks.

If the gas guard saw a green rocket rise from some distant point on the line where the danger was purely local, he did not take time to find out whether or not there were any poisonous vapors in his vicinity, but loosed upon the night air the blood-curdling screeches of his Klaxon. In no time at all green rockets would be

streaming up into the darkness, while off in the diminishing distance echoed the successively repeated warnings of the horn. The shouts of "Gas! Gas!" brought a thousand men to their feet, fingers fumbling for their respirators. Sudden terror, then doubt, then disgust at finding that there was no gas — this was the common sequence of sensations until the men picked up and could imitate that air of superior disdain with which a French soldier could exclaim *"pas de gaz"*. As a matter of safety it was, of course, far better to suffer the discomfort of a thousand false alarms than to run the risk of being caught unprepared by one real attack. Although at first the cry was "Wolf — wolf", there finally came a night when the wolf appeared and sank his fangs deep in the body of the regiment.

Between the G. C.'s there were stretches of unprotected trench, 300 yards or more in length, which could be only occasionally patrolled, and there was always the possibility of Boche patrols working in behind our lines. The officers and men were learning lessons which experience alone could teach. A sentry on post at first spent most of his watch fighting down his fear, and as the night wore on the tension began to tell, his eyes and ears to play him false. Gazing out into a blackness so intense that it seemed to have physical body, he created for himself a thousand imaginary dangers — posts seemed suddenly to transform themselves into crouching Germans waiting to rush upon him and chop him into mincemeat. At times even the horizon seemed to buckle and bend, and then he would let fly a grenade or a burst from his Chauchat.

There is nothing so contagious as rifle fire at dark, unless it be gas alarms, and in a second a miniature

battle would be precipitated against harmless shadows. Then the Boches would wake up with gleaming flares and a healthy response from their vigilant machine guns. A prowling cat could tighten the nerves of an entire platoon a whole night through; and although the men affected in the light of day an amused attitude toward the fears of the night, a creaking limb was a stern reality until it was proved a creaking limb. It was only after many hours of suspense, suspicion, and sudden unnecessary fear that the sounds of the night were divided into the natural and the unnatural — that the suspected German signal was found to be the call of an innocent bird, that the sound of the enemy preparing to rush was only the sighing of the wind, and that the vague and wandering figures of the middle distance were but stumps or the posts that supported protecting bands of wire.

Patrolling by night commenced within the first twenty-four hours in the trenches, when a detail consisting of one officer, two non-coms, and three men from each company then in the line accompanied the regular patrols of the French. From then on, a patrol from the line or support companies went stumbling out through the wire every night on a mission which sounded most important on the order, but in reality was little more than a reconnaissance of our own wire. The real object was to gradually accustom the men to finding their way through the maze of wire, brush, and abandoned trenches without losing their sense of direction or their presence of mind. These first patrols could be followed throughout the greater part of their course by their low-muttered curses, and telltale betrayals of snapping twigs and scraping wire; but by degrees they picked up the tricks of the art, first from the French and then from their own experience,

until they were ready to venture beyond their own territory and, eventually, into the very mouth of the lion — the German trenches.

While the First Battalion was experiencing the initial thrills of contact with the enemy, the others were back in the suburbs of Baccarat, awaiting their turn; the Second Battalion still in billets at Deneuvre, and the Third, minus K Company, which, however, rejoined it on the last day of February, at Badménil.

On Washington's birthday, red-lettered by a general issue of turkey, these two battalions were reviewed in a drenching rain at Baccarat by the higher French and American officers of the area. But aside from that, there was no ceremony to detract from the last important preparations for service at the front. On the evening of the 28th of February the Second Battalion moved up to Neufmaisons in anticipation of their relief of the First Battalion.

On the night of March 2nd the ration cart brought in as passengers de luxe Lieutenant Charles Smith, Sergeant Gurnow, and Corporals Clements and Porter, who, with twenty-nine men of the Supply and Headquarters Companies, had been sent on October 1, 1917, on special detail to Newport News to accompany the animals of the Division to France and to valet for the mules.

Their story had a thrill in it, even when told in the trenches. On the 26th of January they sailed aboard an ex-German boat, the *Hercules,* with a cargo of approximately two thousand animals. On the second day out the steering gear collapsed and they were abandoned by the rest of the convoy to make it alone as best they could. Nine days later they were hit by a terrific storm, during which the wireless apparatus was put out of commission,

the life-boats washed away or smashed to splinters, and one propeller broken off and lost. Then the water tanks burst, flooding Hatch No. 4, and one hundred and fifteen animals were drowned; the battering of the waves sprang a leak; then a fire broke out mysteriously in Hatch No. 1; and to cap the climax the crew mutinied. But the soldiers, most of whom had never before even seen the sea, took matters into their own hands. An "alert" was ordered, the mutiny crushed, and the ship kept afloat by ceaseless pumping.

In all, two hundred and forty-five animals were killed. These unfortunate creatures, many of them mangled and torn to pieces, had to be cut in parts in order to be thrown overboard. For four solid days and nights, without a wink of sleep, the doughboys worked to keep the helplessly floundering ship afloat, disposed of all the carcasses, and maintained a vigilant watch for the renewal of any disorder among the crew. Small wonder that they had no time to think about submarines. The ship limped into Queenstown after seventeen of the most diverting days any one of them could recollect; and after temporary repairs, it proceeded to St. Nazaire where it dropped anchor on the 15th. When the surviving animals were unloaded, not one of them was found fit for service.

The detail from the 168th reported at once to their organizations, and were assigned to duty in the trenches. From manning pumps in a leaking hold to manning pumps in a leaky dugout wasn't such a far cry, especially when a few shells hit close enough to rock the dugout and complete the illusion.

While Sergeant Holden, who had just reported back for duty, was waiting for instructions at the Pink Château an excited Frenchman ran up and gave him to

understand that something was very much the matter. It had to do with *"Mulets"*. *Mulets* meant nothing to the sergeant, but he followed the gesticulating *poilu* to a shelter where a squad of active Machine Gun Company mules had been billeted within kicking radius of several thousand boxed grenades with detonators attached. At the moment a number of the mules were making an obvious effort to get transferred to the Self Inflicted Wounds ward of the veterinary hospital. Four boxes had already been demolished, and some two hundred grenades, which had been carefully packed in sawdust to avoid shock and jar, had been kicked promiscuously about the floor. Sergeant Holden, in his ignorance of the vagaries of the grenade, did not appreciate his danger as he separated mules from grenades, and only afterward learned why the Frenchman kept his distance during the operation.

Before the 1st of March the German forces opposite had discovered that there were American troops in the Chamois sector, and immediately there was a marked change in their activities. The daily shower of shells increased noticeably, and their patrols grew more numerous and bolder. During a heavy bombardment on the 2nd of March, Private Charles Gerdon of D Company had the distinction of being the first man in the regiment wounded and, as a consequence, the first to be decorated. The injury was slight — not nearly so annoying as the results of the injection of anti-tetanus serum — and he insisted on returning to his post as soon as it was dressed. He considered the subsequent bestowal of the Croix de Guerre more of a reward for the treatment than for the actual wound.

It was evident that our lines were being closely

observed. If a working party showed a head above the parapet, a half dozen 77's were at once directed at the spot. A sniper concealed in a clump of evergreens in front of G. C. 12 became obnoxiously active, and at night sounds of activity floated from the direction of the Boche lines. During the 3rd there was heavy shelling on both sides, with an especially violent bombardment of our front at four in the afternoon. The enemy was trying out the nerves of the Iowans — attempting to weaken the morale of the green Yankees who had come to ruffle up their quiet sector.

To the left of the C. R. Chamois was the C. R. Neuviller held by a French battalion, and beyond that the sub-sector Ancerviller occupied by French and Americans, represented by a battalion of the 167th Infantry which was likewise making its début in the trenches. On the night of March 3-4 the enemy attempted to raid this sector, but instead of taking prisoners left two of their own behind them.

Warning of this raid had come to us through the admirable French Intelligence Service, but as the exact point of attack was undetermined, the word was passed along the entire front line. This meant an all-night alert for the Chamois front, and the entire garrison was forced to remain at its combat posts until daylight.

The companies in the line were to have been relieved on the 4th, but in the face of the threatened enemy activity it was decided to make no change until the situation cleared. Beginning at ten in the morning of the 4th, the Boche kept up an intermittent artillery fire on parts of our front. At one in the afternoon, Colonel Tinley received word from the French that they had intercepted a German telephone message giving infor-

mation of an intended bombardment of the line. Runners were immediately sent to the front to warn our men there, and everybody was under cover when the strafing commenced. From three to half past three there was a violent bombardment of the right of the sector, and for fifteen minutes, beginning at 3:50, the Boche unlatched everything he had in the way of artillery, distributed generally over the whole front. At intervals from then until after dark there were sporadic outbursts of varying intensity.

During the early part of the night disquieting sounds issued from certain points in front of our lines, and requests for artillery fire upon the suspected area were sent back to Headquarters. Shortly after midnight the presence of a patrol, or patrols, in rear of our positions was detected.

By this time the men, fatigued from the prolonged alert of the previous night, with nerves on edge from the continued shelling, and apprehensive at the indications of enemy aggression, had reached the point where it would have been a relief to have anything happen — anything to clear the air and end the suspense. Something was going to happen. Every man felt sure of that, and dreaded it — yet at the same time was impatient for the storm to break.

XI

MARCH THE FIFTH

A HIGH-HANGING moon outlines sharply against the snow the strangely distorted landscape of the Chamois sector. Bold on the horizon, like a spectre raised up to reproach the enemy that has destroyed it, lies the broken pile of the Farm. The opposite wood, whose skeletoned trunks point stiffly to the sky, casts weird shadows to the ground now covered with a shimmering blanket of white. From the German line a flare rushes upward, tracing overhead its graceful parabola as if to challenge the glory of the moon. Below in the ugly gashes that are the trenches, silent sentries anxiously scan the pitted contour of No Man's Land, relaxing long enough to thresh their arms and stamp their feet in a hopeful endeavor to restore circulation to their chilled bodies. In the crowded shelters beneath them, their worn comrades, dressed, fully armed, fearfully expectant, wait through the long night; while a small patrol, immobile as carven figures, gaze fixed on the enemy line, crouches in front of the *petit poste* PSB. A thousand yards back, Badonviller sleeps, guarded by a handful of sentries.

A nervous burst of machine gun fire, the boom of a grenade down the line, the crack of a rifle, the distant crowing of a rooster, alternately strike the ear; then for a moment an air of peace and profound silence, broken only by the soft blowing of the wind, envelops this small corner of Lorraine. It is half past four — an hour until dawn.

Suddenly, with the instantaneity of a lightning flash, the whole north seems to rise up in flames and hurl itself forward — like an agile, hungry tiger leaping down upon its prey. With a thunderous, dismaying roar it falls upon the Chamois, raining steel and destruction. There is no need to waken any one; air and earth tremble with the concussion of bursting shells, and men at the front, in the support, back in town, all find themselves on their feet without being conscious of the force that placed them there.

In the trenches every post, save those of the lookouts, is instantly abandoned. Terrified bodies come rushing, slipping, stumbling, splashing to the dugouts, dodging bits of flying débris, ducking showers of dirt, their path lighted by flashing explosions. Already the wires connecting the front with the reserve are out, and all communication is suspended. From each G. C. rockets shoot heavenward, to be answered almost immediately by the alert artillery — half French, half American. Guards at dugout entrances breathlessly watch and wait, eyes and ears strained for the slightest variation in the deafening turmoil that may signify a shift in the barrage and give warning of the approach of the enemy.

Soon the bombardment resolves itself into one steady roar in which it is impossible to distinguish the individual detonations. The heavy concentration of enemy shells is turning the whole Chamois system into a hecatomb of horror and confusion. Trenches that were, cease to be and leave in their place gaping craters which in turn are torn afresh. Carmine flashes from the northern sky translate themselves into carmine splashes and pools on the furrowed soil. A heavy cloud of smoke and dust, like

a gigantic pall to enshroud those torn bodies whose spirits have fled, obscures the waning moon.

Awed and shaken, the men crouch in the dark, oppressive dugouts, waiting for the signal which will send them forth to determine their fate. And while no man of them would avoid the responsibility about to be placed upon him, sudden memories crowd to the fore to make life seem more dear. An attempted jest, a bit of forced laughter, falls unheard from the lips of a comrade, for the pounding of the guns is equalled only by the wild pounding of their own hearts and the heavy breathing of their trembling bodies. A sickening sensation thus to be caged helpless like a hunted animal which awaits only the finishing stroke. At any moment one of the larger shells may bury them all — they have the alternative of forsaking the inadequate shelter and being blown to pieces in the open trench — or the outnumbering force of picked *Stosstruppen* may fall upon them before they have an opportunity to defend themselves. The suspense is enough to drive one mad.

For half an hour there is no diminution of the fire. On the front line the enemy continues to rain a devastating storm from his field pieces, while the heavier guns, the 210's, are directed on the support, and churn up the trenches about the headquarters of Companies B and D. The communicating boyaux have long since been obliterated, and with all wires severed the front is completely isolated.

Shortly after five, as the first cold streaks of dawn are rifting the morning sky, the observers at the dugout mouths perceive a slight shifting of the barrage and immediately pass down the information. "Every man to his post", shout the commanders. In an instant the

abris are emptied; although shells still fall about them, the men rush to their stations without panic and without hesitation. They see our counter-barrage come thundering down before them; the bass blasts of our trench mortars and the steady put-put-put of American-fed machine guns inspire them with every confidence. They are ready for the encounter; "Let 'em come" is the challenge.

The German High Command, upon learning of the presence of Americans on this front, had determined to strike a demoralizing blow. A raid is ordinarily a very one-sided affair, and to the individual much more terrible than a general attack, for the concentration in men and guns is greater than could be possible on an extended front. The Boches were going to make this one particularly terrible. The 15th Bavarian Sturm Battalion was carefully rehearsed in the maneuver for some time before the attack. It was later stated by prisoners that Hindenburg himself was waiting back in Cirey to review the attacking troops and to parade the Yankee captives.

G. C. 11, the most vulnerable strong point in the sector, was selected for the principal assault. Jutting out like a peninsula into No Man's Land, it was exposed on three sides, so situated that the attacking party could approach closely without being observed. The object of the hostile fire here was not to completely destroy the post, but to cut it off from support and to so paralyze resistance that it could be easily surrounded and the entire garrison captured or killed. At the moment the barrage shifted to the rear an overwhelming force of Huns, plentifully supplied with grenades, knives, and pistols, made ready to rush our trench.

Six of them, following closely upon the heel of their

own barrage, and guided by the line of white tape previously laid to mark their point of entry, reached one of our dugouts just as its four occupants had started up the steps. Without the slightest warning, a grenade burst in the midst of the Iowans and hurled them all to the bottom. Private Byron Van Raden fell dead between the legs of a stunned comrade, Corporal Morgan of H Company; and the other two, Corporal Marvin Dunn and Private Raymond Closson, were both badly wounded.

Attracted by the explosion, Privates Miller, King, and Johnson rushed to this section of the trench. Through the clearing smoke they made out the field-gray uniform and clumsy helmet of the Hun. In an instant Miller was up on the parapet with his Chauchat spitting at the enemy. At that most critical moment his gun jammed; but the other two, without stopping to consider the odds, were on the enemy like a flash. Dismayed by this unexpected and impetuous attack, the advancing Boches stopped short, wavered, and then turned tail. Back through the wire they tore, leaving behind them a trail of grenades, rifles, and any other objects that might restrict their speed.

Lieutenant Howard Smith, the officer in command of the post, and Lieutenant Adams of H Company, who was caught there while on a visit of reconnaissance, came upon another line of tape, and following it up, surprised a covering party just beyond the parapet. Thereby that line was closed to them both as a means of ingress and of egress.

As far as it is known no other Boches succeeded in breaking through; Springfields and Chauchats saw to that. Within a very few minutes the raid was over, all the enemy having retired in confusion. Just what

casualties they suffered is unknown, for they managed to carry back all their wounded and dead, except one body which was found a week later in an abandoned trench in front of G. C. 11. It was through the clothing and articles on this body that the 15th Sturm Battalion was identified as the attacking unit.

The assault, however, was not confined to G. C. 11. To the extreme left of the sector was a small, isolated combat position, PSJ, defended by a group of B Company men and two auto-riflemen from A under Sergeant Bushby. Instead of taking to shelter, this courageous leader elected to remain out in the open during the entire bombardment, and as a result of his observations was so able to dispose his forces and to direct the fire of his automatic rifles as to completely shatter the attack of the enemy who had almost succeeded in outflanking the post.

G. C. 12, commanded by Lieutenant Payette, was also the object of Boche attack. When the men in the northern dugout rushed to their combat position they discovered, through the early morning mist, a considerable number of the enemy working toward their lines. They were easily dispersed by the storm of bullets that whistled disconcertingly about their ears; and, without waiting to see where the fire was coming from, those particular exponents of *Kultur* about-faced and double-timed back toward the Fatherland. The menace of a frontal attack having been dispelled, a section under Lieutenant Witherell happened to think of the patrol reported in rear of the line earlier in the night, and swung their automatics around just in time to meet a similar group coming from that direction. It was likewise a matter of a few seconds to send them scurrying in undignified haste through the wide and unprotected opening between G. C.

12 and PSJ. Had the Americans been less quick-witted, or had the second party remained undiscovered for a minute longer, the surprise attack so carefully planned from two directions might well have been successful.

In addition to these attempts, small parties of the enemy were also seen on the right of the line in front of the D Company sector, but none of them got within striking distance of our posts.

Perhaps the most terrifying experience of the whole engagement was that which befell Lieutenant Donahue and his patrol of seven men from D Company. This patrol had been in position since one o'clock at an opening in the wire in front of the listening post PSB and was just preparing to return when the German artillery opened up. Confronted on one hand by the necessity of making our lines before daylight, and on the other by a flaming curtain of steel, and with the feeling that the entire German army was about to fall upon them, it is small wonder that they thought themselves lost. The *Boyau de la Lisière,* through which they had hoped to reach safety, was seething under an avalanche of shells, and in a few minutes was leveled. By that time the Allied barrage was throwing up fountains of clay behind them, and machine gun bullets from either side skimming overhead kept them close to the ground. To remain in that position was unthinkable, and their only hope was to break through the enemy barrage. Steadied and directed by their lieutenant, and taking advantage of every bit of available cover — old trenches, shell holes, anything — hugging the earth as hot fragments of steel screamed around them, crawling forward a foot at a time, now halting to catch their breath, now choking from explosive gases, dazed from concussion and blinding flashes, they

gradually made their way to the smoke-obscured line. It was shortly after five o'clock when Donahue, reporting in with nobody missing and without a single casualty, attained the uncertain haven of G. C. 9 and added his begrimed and panting patrol to its garrison.

Although the infantry attack had been shattered, the enemy artillery continued to work havoc on our intrenched positions. On G. C. 9, after about forty-five minutes of bombardment, the barrage lifted and moved 150 yards to the rear. In an instant the combat posts were manned, machine gunners left their bomb proofs and sprang to their guns, and the Stokes mortars directly in rear took up their fire, overwhelming the enemy trench and eventually silencing a battery of minenwerfer which was throwing bombs from a position in the woods ahead of PSB. For fifteen minutes everyone nervously awaited the anticipated assault, but none materialized. However, at the stroke of half past five a veritable flood of large calibre "minnies" struck the area simultaneously, and the roar of that terrific explosion had not yet died when the barrage fell upon them anew. In the twinkling of an eye, twelve lives were blotted out and seven wounded bodies lay torn and bleeding on the trench floor.

A single shell, lighting squarely on the Stokes squad which had been doing such valiant work, wiped out the entire crew of seven and destroyed the gun. Of Sergeant Porsch and Private Nash no trace was ever found, but the mutilated bodies of Sergeant Wedding, Corporal Parish, and Privates Hoschler, Pederson, and Worden were later recovered.

Over to the left, at P. A. 6, with the first roar of the artillery, Captain McHenry was out in the trenches directing his men to safety, encouraging them with his

presence, and supervising preparations for defense. Had he sought the safety of his dugout, B Company would have been spared a beloved commander, but McHenry was not the sort to seek safety for himself while any of his men were in danger. Returning from one of his posts, he stopped at a small shelter which served as sergeants' headquarters, and at that moment an eight-inch shell made a direct hit, demolishing the shelter, and killing him and Private Worley, one of his runners. The regiment's youngest captain had uttered his last word of encouragement, had issued his last command. Although he was dead his influence survived, and the "McHenry tradition" that was born of that battle carried B Company through many dark days.

Back at Battalion Headquarters in Badonviller, where the fire was less heavy, a tense group waited. In an atmosphere as taut as a violin string, Colonel Tinley, suppressing whatever emotions that may have been battling for precedence, calmly made the arrangements for countering the assault. It was for him to shoulder the responsibility of disposing his forces to meet the numerous eventualities that might develop. Perhaps as time went on, and no word came from the front, even he became inwardly uneasy. But when anxious inquiries came over the wire from Regimental Headquarters he answered, with only an unbounded confidence to support his belief, that the G. C.'s were holding out, that every man of the 168th was at his post and would remain there. He knew what kind of men he commanded.

Within a few minutes of the opening of the bombardment the operator at the Pink Château reported that every line connecting with the front was out, and soon after word reached the Battalion Commander that the

SECTION OF SUPPORT TRENCH
AFTER RAID ON MARCH 5TH

FRONT LINE TRENCH OF THE 168TH
AFTER BOMBARDMENT ON MARCH 5TH

WHERE CAPTAIN McHENRY MET HIS DEATH

CRATER BLOWN OUT BY THE 10-INCH SHELL THAT KILLED SEVEN MEN OF THE STOKES MORTAR PLATOON ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 5TH

fire seemed to be concentrated principally on P. A. Malgréjean and its two G. C.'s. Thereupon he immediately ordered A Company into the "alert for combat" position in support of Captain McHenry. As the men rushed from their *abris* and streaked down the road four at a time, shells burst all around them and chips from shattered buildings flew about like hail; and while not a single casualty was suffered, there were many close shaves. A dud lit directly between Lieutenant Irwin and Sergeant Wilkinson, the rush of air taking their breath; the next shell almost buried two others. But Captain Aikins was soon able to report that his company was in position, one platoon in the support trench and the other three at different stations on the edge of town — all ready for immediate action.

Meanwhile the platoon of F Company, 117th Engineers, which had been detailed to the front of the 168th, reported that they, too, were alert and prepared for combat. As was later found to be the invariable case, the engineers were ready and willing to assume the duties of infantrymen; so they were attached to A Company, half of them going to the support trench and the rest remaining with the platoon at the Château Fenal.

About five o'clock, when word was received that the fire was falling with increasing violence on the right of the sector, Company C, which was being held in readiness, was directed to take up position to the rear of P. A. Colcombet. In less than twenty minutes Captain Horton started a runner from his post of command in the quarry with the information that he was in position and in liaison with Captain Haynes.

Now that the entire support had been used to reënforce the threatened positions, the French who remained in the

vicinity came streaming through the streets of Badonviller — from where, no one seemed to know; but there they were, determined to help save the town from the possibility of a fourth capture.

Half past five. An hour had passed since the beginning of the bombardment, and still no word from the front. Captain Haynes at P. A. 5 sends a runner out into the storm to get a report from the line, but the lad comes back, well-nigh exhausted, saying that it is impossible to get through. The communicating trenches are leveled, and the ground surface an impenetrable mass of débris and wire which is still writhing under the enemy barrage. Captain Haynes must know what is happening at his forward posts, and there is but one way to get the information.

"Finch."

"Here, Sir."

"Go out to G. C. 9, find Lieutenant Spaulding, and bring me word of the situation."

"Yes, Sir", and Finch is gone. In fifteen minutes he comes stumbling down the dugout steps.

"I tried, Captain, but couldn't make it", he pants; and as he looks into the captain's eyes he sees beneath the look of human sympathy the stern necessity of things that must be done. A sudden resolution seizes him, and before the captain has turned to pick a man for the third attempt —"I'm going back, Captain, and this time I'll get through." Again he is gone.

Through the inferno of bursting shells, through the tangle of brush and wire and débris, picking himself out of the mud where concussion has hurled him, stumbling over craters, Finch makes his way. Meanwhile Private Travoni is risking his life times over on a similar errand

to G. C. 10 to get word from Lieutenant Fraser. He is breathless and soaked from head to foot, for the only shelter he can find when the shells break too close is in the water-filled trenches to the side. By some miracle these two reach their destinations in safety and return to P. A. 5 with the information that D Company's front is unbroken.

Out from Badonviller, cutting through the front line and on to the German-held town of Bréménil, runs what had once been a smooth macadamized highway. It is under direct enemy observation and can be used only under the protection of the darkness of night. Private Shephard, scrambling out of the battered trenches of G. C. 11 with Lieutenant Smith's report of the raid fast in his pocket, does not pick this road for safety but for speed. Torn by shells and blocked by wire, it is better ground for an obstacle race than for a quarter-mile dash. There are no spectators to roar their cheers of encouragement from packed stands; there are no struggling competitors to spur him on. Shephard is racing against time — an atom of humanity in a chaos of destruction — and whatever bets lie in the hand of chance are all against him.

Our own machine gun barrage sings with threatening nearness overhead, and enemy bullets cut the surface of the road about his feet and bury themselves in the ground around him. Twice explosions knock him sprawling, but each time, bruised and shaken, he regains his footing and struggles on.

It is nearly six o'clock. The group at Battalion Headquarters nervously eye each other. So far not a single indication of what has happened on the firing line has reached them. Five runners have returned to their

post defeated, unable to break through the shrieking barrier of steel. Then, into the room where Colonel Tinley waits, stumbles Shephard, disheveled, blood-flecked, torn by wire, dripping with mud, exhausted.

"Young man, I salute you", says the Battalion Commander, straightening up and raising his hand to his forehead. A faint smile plays at the lips of the runner as he falls unconscious into a pair of steadying arms.

The arrival of Private Shephard was a message in itself. When he had recovered sufficiently to speak, he told his story of green troops standing fast through their first engagement — a story that was duplicated as the runners from the other parts of the line came in with their reports. By foot messenger the word went back to Regimental Headquarters at Pexonne where an anxious group was gathered in suspense. Not until six o'clock had they heard from the front line, and then only a meagre report from the French in C. R. Village Nègre, the sector to the right, that the bombardment of the American line was continuing with undiminished violence.

Colonel Allié was with Colonel Bennett waiting to hear how these raw American troops had withstood the test. Realizing the main object of the enemy attack, his first question was, "Any American prisoners?" Before any one else could reply, the runner who had brought the message, forgetting discipline, manners, and all else in his pride and excitement, burst out, "Hell, no, that's not the way we fight."

On up through military channels, both French and American, went the message. Colonel Allié in his official report said: "The American troops who occupied this position, although they suffered their first attack, have energetically resisted and kept their coolness. Therefore

it can be certified that the valor of these troops is highly reliable.''

When the report of this action reached G. H. Q., it became a matter of slight significance — a short paragraph in the communiqué, a mere incident in the daily happenings on the battle line. But there was a special significance in the fact that this was the first test of the National Guard on the Western Front. The nation had seen its faith in the Regular Army justified and was awaiting the trial of its volunteers. ''It can be certified that the valor of these soldiers is highly reliable'' was the answer.

Soon after six o'clock the bombardment lessened in intensity, and although the enemy shelling continued until seven, it was apparent that the critical part of the action was past. As the reports came in gradually from the various sections, it was learned in detail how steadfastly and how courageously each unit had played its part. When a thousand men meet a crisis with a high average of courage and bravery, the individual achievement in line of duty is looked upon as commonplace. But there were many instances of outstanding devotion to duty during this action of March 5th — some, perhaps most, of which will never be recorded.

Of all our posts, G. C. 9 was the most heavily hit. Here one out of every three was wounded and every fifth man killed. But in spite of the terrific fire two automatic teams braved the entire bombardment in the open. One of them escaped injury, but the other lost Privates William T. Smith and Moffard Breese killed, and three wounded. Private Shores, who, in addition to painful wounds, suffered a broken arm, refused to seek shelter and remained on duty throughout the action.

In anticipation of the attack, Lieutenant Spaulding had prepared a coded message to send to Battalion Headquarters. When there was no longer doubt that the Germans meant business, he handed it for transmission to Rufus M. Smith of the Signal Platoon, who was the buzzerphone operator at that station. Spaulding then left the dugout to watch developments from the open trench. Suddenly Smith appeared at his side.

"Lieutenant", he said, "the line's out. Where'll I find a rifle?"

And when the time came to man the combat posts, Smith of the Headquarters Company was in the foremost rank.

Over in G. C. 10 the trenches were so torn by the bombardment as to be almost unrecognizable, and its garrison was forced to man the craters blown out by the enemy shells. The barrage placed in front of this post by the machine guns from Position 17 was so effective that not a Boche could break through. Disappointed at not having a chance to get back at the Huns, Preston, the oldest man in the platoon, begged Lieutenant Fraser to let them go out and find some, and was altogether disconsolate when this permission was denied.

Not a single casualty was reported from G. C. 12 — which was remarkable, considering the condition into which the artillery had battered their defenses. Lieutenant Payette, fearful of an attack from a grove of evergreens to the right, posted three men with an autorifle to cover it, at the same time giving them instructions to withdraw to the dugout if the fire became too severe. Evidently the words "too severe" were meaningless to Privates Marchael, Cavett, and Bond, and evidently "fear" was not in their vocabulary, for they stuck

through one of the heaviest and most concentrated bombardments that the regiment was ever to experience. What they and the other stout-hearted men who unflinchingly faced the uncertainty of the open trench that morning went through would have whitened the hair of men of less steady nerve. With their post destroyed, and death-dealing explosives falling everywhere, they ducked, dodged, hugged the earth, cussed the Boches a good deal, and perhaps even prayed a little, but they never once left uncovered that important patch of trees. The guard on duty at the dugout mouth, too, had cause to be thankful, for a 105 landed on top of the dugout, failed to explode, rolled down the slope of piled earth, and lodged harmlessly in the revetment at his feet.

Back at P. A. 6 Private Isaac Davis, twice refusing permission to take cover, remained at his post until killed by a high explosive shell. When the word reached Lieutenant Peterson of the Headquarters Company that one of his Stokes crews had been wiped out, he left his dugout in the reserve trenches and made his way through the barrage to the one which was still in action. He then took a hand in the operation of the piece in order to keep it at top speed, and when the ammunition was all expended he helped to bring over the unexploded shells from the destroyed post. Until they ran entirely out of shells this crew kept their sector covered and prevented the Boche from developing an attack at that point.

Captain Fleur's Machine Gun Company was a valuable asset to the defense. From four positions along the line of the support trenches they poured thousands of rounds Bocheward. Besides offering an effective barrier to the enemy, the steady staccato of these guns did much to

hearten the men in the firing line and to inspire them with confidence in their support.

About midway between P. A. 5 and G. C. 9 was a sacrifice position, Post 14. Its guns were emplaced so as to command the swale in rear of the infantry front line with an enfilade fire. It was to fire only in case D Company retired, and its mission then was to cover its withdrawal. But in no circumstance were the machine gunners themselves to withdraw: they must fight to the end. It was not unnatural then that Lieutenant Riley, in command of the post, should be a bit interested in the intentions of the D Company commander. During the bombardment he sent a runner back to Captain Haynes to find out whether he was going to hold or withdraw and leave Post 14 to its fate. The Captain, who had orders himself to hold to the last man on the line of the P. A. if the enemy broke through the first line, briefly scribbled this joyful announcement: "The line is intact, and Company D will hold."

Although in dangerously exposed positions, the Machine Gun Company had few casualties. The squad under Corporal Murray on Position 19 had been firing ever since the first call for barrage. All the protection they had was a barricade of sandbags across the front and along the sides of the pit. Shells had been falling close enough to throw mud and rock all over the men, and finally one burst in front at the base of the barricade, blowing the gun and all of the crew clear out of the pit. Somehow or other, they all escaped injury, although it took some time for them to regain their senses. As the gun was unharmed, it was set up anew and the firing resumed. Corporal Donald H. Macrae was the only member of the company to lose his life. He was watching

for jams in a gun at Position 18 while the man who usually performed that duty was lugging up ammunition, when an overhead burst of shrapnel killed him instantly.

During the bombardment it had been possible to give the wounded only the most temporary relief — just enough to keep them from bleeding to death. While the shelling was heaviest, Lieutenant Van Meter of the Sanitary Detachment appeared at Captain Haynes' headquarters, pipe in mouth, nonchalant. As he started out in the direction of the forward lines, the D Company commander said: "What are you going up there for?" "What in Hell did I join this man's army for anyhow", came the answer.

At the same time Lieutenant Williams and Sergeant Burke set out for P. A. 6, the post of the former's brother-in-law, Captain McHenry.

The moment the barrage lifted, the first aid men were rushed forward, and they were soon busy with their skilled fingers carefully bandaging torn bodies, applying splints to fractured limbs, and easing pain. Chaplain Robb and a Y. M. C. A. man were on the spot assisting to care for the dead and the wounded. The few who were slightly wounded sat around smoking and viewed calmly each others' blood-soaked bandages, but their more seriously injured comrades, wrapped in blankets, lay on the trench floor, silent and waxen-faced.

The first message that Lieutenant Smith sent back from G. C. 11, after reporting the situation at his post, was a request for a detail to work on *Boyau Central* so that the wounded could be taken back. There was no time to wait for that, as the clearing of the trenches was an enormous task, so the litters were taken out over the top and carried across the open ground under direct

enemy observation. To the credit of the Boche, it must be stated that he very sportingly refrained from firing on them.

Slowly and gently the stretcher-bearers picked their way back to the dressing station in Badonviller where, as they proceeded up the street, men crowded around to gaze with respect, almost with awe, upon their inert burdens. In their eyes these first battle-wounded were veteran heroes — a people set apart, to be spoken of only with reverence. After a brief rest at the station the wounded were loaded into ambulances, and in a few hours all of them were under clean sheets in the Baccarat hospital.

Aside from the three casualties inflicted by the raiders on G. C. 11, the losses of the regiment, totaling twenty-one killed or died of wounds and twenty-two wounded, were all caused by artillery fire. About half of the men received wounds of so serious a nature that they were never able to rejoin the regiment. And to the debit side of the ledger must be added the two officers killed and the eleven men wounded from the 149th and 151st Field Artillery while supporting the infantry.

Now that the wounded had been cared for, the most important duty was to get the trenches into condition to resist further attack and to open up the arteries to the rear so that food and supplies could be brought up. As early as seven o'clock Colonel Tinley ordered a party from the 117th Engineers and Company A to start work on the excavation of Captain McHenry's dugout. Although the enemy bombardment had raised shortly after six, the shelling of our position continued intermittently until half past seven, but the relief details paid little attention to it.

As soon as it was practicable, parties from the support companies were sent forward to replace the casualties in the line and to assist in clearing the trenches and boyaux. Others, working feverishly in the ghastly wreckage, recovered the bodies that had not been blown to pieces and carried them to the rear.

By ten o'clock the sector had resumed, outwardly at least, the tranquility of the night before; the sun came out to bring what comfort it could to weary, nerve-tired men, and a Sunday calm settled over the country. Even when German planes came over to observe the extent of the damage, there was no outbreak. In the course of the forenoon fifteen of them appeared over the C. R. Chamois, some of them swooping so low that the observers' faces were plainly distinguishable as they leaned over to grin at the men below. But no Allied plane came to contest the freedom of their movements, and the doughboys were certainly too weary to bother about them.

All through the morning the Signal Platoon was at work repairing the lines of wire communication. At nine o'clock one circuit was completed to each station, and by noon Lieutenant Hutchins, who personally superintended the work, was able to report to Colonel Tinley that all the lines were in order, and that communication throughout the sector was fully restored.

The hardships and the strain to which the men in the front line had been subjected during this first real war experience left them in a condition difficult of description. For nine days they had been living in mud and water, restricted in movement, cramped with cold, with few and broken hours of sleep, and with scant meals — for the most part cold and eaten at irregular intervals. The

combination of rats, vermin, cold, and water had deprived the dugouts of what little comfort and protection they had to offer, and serious cases of "trench-feet" and rheumatism had resulted from wading about in knee-deep mud and water day and night. The men had not yet been issued rubber boots, nor was there any way in which to dry the shoes or clothing when they had once become wet. In many cases feet had become so swollen and inflamed that it was inadvisable to remove the shoes for fear that they would not go on again.

In addition to the physical strain, there was the tension of nerves that marked every hour of those nine days — that constant anticipation of the possible that never wears off, though continued service in the line reduces it to an attitude of nonchalant fatalism. These men had peered for hours at a time into the dim shadows of a spot more desolate, more forbidding than the loneliest graveyard, where ghosts were real and active. Many times throughout the long night had come that sudden tightening of every nerve and muscle in reaction to a nebulous shape in the dusk or an unexpected sound. How often had the cold sweat started from numb limbs and hands that gripped at rifle stocks, as these men braced themselves for the shots, the rush of the enemy, and the hot-handed fight in the dark that they thought was about to come. Such had been the nights from which only the light of day could bring relief.

On the morning of March 6th, as the men of the front line platoons marched out from the trenches, on through the streets of Badonviller, and out through the wooded paths that covered their movements from the eyes of the enemy, the country impressed itself upon their benumbed senses as a place of curious freedom and of vast spaces.

It produced a mental reflex akin to the physical sensation that a man experiences when he puts on an overcoat that is too large for him. They were in that state of utter weariness in which one has to struggle to force words into his mind, and again struggle to force them from his lips. Thoughts wandered off into a maze, and had to be recalled and repeated before they could be marshalled into a coherent sentence. Here was a forgotten, but welcome, land of peace. The reaction to it was so complete that it was almost stupefying; one felt that there might be things to be enjoyed back here away from the shells and the mud if one could only first rest — one whole night of undisturbed sleep.

General Pershing stood beside the road not far from Badonviller and watched them trudge wearily past on their way to Neufmaisons. There was no glitter, pomp, or ceremony to mark the occasion — it was one of the most informal reviews ever held. With clothes torn by wire and plastered with accumulations of mud, the men trailed by in single file, some so absorbed in watching the lagging limbs of the man ahead that they never noticed the trim, erect figure standing there surrounded by members of his staff. The Commander-in-Chief got information first-hand by calling out here and there from the line officers whom he engaged in conversation on the events of the raid.

The General had earlier spent an hour with Colonel Bennett and Colonel Allié at Pexonne, and had then driven with them up to Badonviller where Colonel Tinley was presented to him, and where he saw for himself the destruction wrought by the enemy. After reviewing the troops in the woods, he accompanied General Ségonne of the French 128th Division through the hospitals of

Baccarat, and there witnessed the conferring of the Croix de Guerre upon a number of our wounded.

Decorations were formally presented to others at a battalion parade in Badménil on the 15th of March in the presence of General Ségonne, General Brown, commander of the 84th Brigade, and Colonel Bennett. In addition to the individual presentations, which included a number of posthumous awards, the First and Second Platoons of B and D Companies were cited in the orders of the French 128th Division and received the Croix de Guerre as units. The Commander of the American First Army Corps, in a letter to the C. G. of the 42nd Division on the subject of these decorations stated:

"The Commander-in-Chief charges me with the conveyance to these officers and soldiers his particular appreciation of their splendid conduct, which has won for them these citations from the French Army.

"To the appreciation thus conferred by the Commander-in-Chief, the Corps Commander adds his own, and desires that the foregoing be made known in a suitable manner to the officers and soldiers cited."

A sorrowful procession wound slowly up the hill from Baccarat to the peaceful little cemetery on the afternoon of the 6th of March. At the head was the Band of the 168th, from which came the poignantly sad-sweet strains of Chopin's soul-stirring *Funeral March*; behind it, a motor truck flying the Stars and Stripes, and then one with the Tricolor; next an escort of French and American soldiers following with measured tread; and finally a group of grieving friends. Baccarat had seen many such processions through four bitter years, yet it paused to offer the homage of bared heads, and perhaps to offer a prayer for the repose of their souls, as the silent bodies of the American dead passed by to their resting place.

The burial services were simple, dignified, moving. Following the prayer by Chaplain Robb, and the addresses of General Brown and Colonel Bennett, General Ségonne stepped forward to speak:

It is with deep emotion that in the name of your comrades of the French Army I come to-day to honor the remains of Captain McHenry and of the brave American soldiers who died gloriously at the hands of the enemy on the morning of March 5th when they were defending with tenacity and energy the positions which had been entrusted them.

The conduct of the American troops since their entry into the sector of Baccarat, their strength under fire, their ardor in the conflict, is in every respect worthy of praise.

It is in memory of Captain McHenry, it is in memory of the American regiment of infantry and artillery — these men I intend to glorify.

The noble American blood that has just flowed in the ancient territory of Lorraine, the time-honored battle-field, forms a stronger tie between our two armies.

In the folds of the American and French flags flow the same ideals of justice, of loyalty, of liberty, and of victory. Sacrifice generates immortality. The shade of these two flags will be soft to the departed heroes.

Captain McHenry, American soldiers: Sleep in peace the grand sleep of glory; you will not be forgotten, and you will be avenged.

XII

THE FIRST AMERICAN ATTACK

About the time that the 168th entered the trenches the French 128th Division decided to make a raid on the enemy's position in the vicinity of Badonviller, and on the 1st of March a detailed order for an operation which was to employ four French companies and two from the American regiment was issued by the French Staff.

Two days later Colonel Bennett notified Captain Casey and Captain Ross that their companies had been selected for the honor of participating in the first offensive action of the 168th. Rehearsals for the encounter were commenced on the same day. As it turned out, this was the first attack on the Western Front in which American companies operated as units, and the first in which American troops ever fought in the German trenches. A raid planned to be carried out by troops of the 16th and 18th Regiments of the First Division on the flanks of the Richecourt salient on the night of March 3-4 was cancelled at the last moment (after the artillery and machine guns had already been firing) because of the failure of engineer detachments to arrive with Bangalore torpedoes in time to open the German wire for the raiding parties. This operation was then postponed until some forty-eight hours after the successful completion of the raid in which the 168th took part.

In its five typewritten pages, General Order No. 95 of the French 128th Division provided for everything from the number of cartridges each man was to carry to the

MEN OF COMPANY M RESTING IN NEUF-
MAISONS AFTER RAID OF MARCH 9TH

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS AT NEUFMAISONS

AIRPLANE PHOTO. TO THE LEFT, THE VILLAGE OF NEUVILLER FROM WHICH F COMPANY ATTACKED ON MARCH 9TH. IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER, THE SAILLANT DU FEYS. GROUND COVERED WITH SNOW

particular points upon which each battery of artillery was to fire. In masterly detail it specified definitely where, when, and how each unit was to operate and what its mission was to be.

This action was in reality two raids simultaneously executed. Each was under separate command, and neither of the American companies saw the other until after the return to our lines. The two portions of the enemy front assaulted were not widely separated, but woods and the rolling hills obstructed the view.

The object of the raid, however, was the same for both elements: to penetrate the enemy's lines, to "mop up" his trenches, to destroy his dugouts and emplacements, and to capture prisoners and such material as would be of value in identifying the opposing units.

The day and the hour of the attack were not indicated in the order, but were indefinitely referred to as *J* day and *H* hour. Commencing at *H* minus 4, the artillery preparation had as its first object the destruction of the trenches and works of defense in the enemy area. Further than that, it was to make breaches in the wire entanglements; to neutralize, as far as possible, the hostile artillery; and, by a barrage directed at the Boche reserves, to prevent them from coming to the aid of the isolated sections. At *H* hour a rolling barrage was to drop ahead of our lines, and, advancing at the rate of one hundred meters in three minutes, was to sweep forward and continue as a protection until our men returned. Eight different calibres of trench, field, and heavy artillery, including four pieces of 240's, were to be employed.

Colonel Allié was in command of the raid as a whole. Major Legret of the French 169th Infantry was in charge

of the element on the right, which included M Company of the 168th American. This party was to debouch from the front lines of the C. R. Village Nègre, adjoining Chamois on the right, and raid the German trenches of Mecklembourg and des Hêtres, northeast of the ruins of Chamois Farm. F Company was assigned to the element on the left, under command of Major Massié of the French 168th Infantry, which was to jump off near the village of Neuviller, to the left of the C. R. Chamois, and attack the Saillant du Feys. A side issue to the raid was a reconnaissance by a platoon of French of the Riga trench in the Saillant de Bohême, opposite the C. R. Village Nègre, with the mission of picking up any stray Boches that might escape the net of the *coup de main* on the right, and incidentally to protect the right flank.

Two fields near Baccarat, duplicating as closely as possible the contours and proportions of the enemy positions to be taken, were selected for rehearsals. From airplane photographs it was possible to determine not only the position of the enemy trenches but the location of their dugouts and fortified emplacements. On these fields were represented all the details of the area, with the relative distances and intervals so closely approximated that each unit could be shown clearly where it was to go and what it was to do.

The practice period with the French lasted four days, from the 3rd to the 7th of March. During this time, M Company, which remained behind when the rest of the Third Battalion moved up into the support position, was billeted in Badménil; and F Company, which had been brought back from Neufmaisons, was stationed in the Haxo Barracks in Baccarat. The preparations for the raid were carried on in the utmost secrecy, the men in F

and M Companies themselves being kept in the dark as to what all the maneuvering was about for the first day or so.

In each raiding party there were to be two French companies in the line, with an American company between the two. M Company trained with two companies from the French 169th Infantry under the direction of Major Legret; and Major Massié supervised the work of Captain Casey's organization and the two companies of the French 168th Infantry.

Both these officers were men of exceptional qualification by reason of experience and training. Major Legret had seen four years of distinguished service, and had a personal incentive as well to exert the full force of his individual power in the fight against the enemy. In the city of Gerbéviller, fifteen miles northwest of Baccarat, during those days of horror when the Germans were trying to crush France in an appalling orgy of murder and destruction, Major Legret's father, a peaceful civilian, had been shot down in cold blood as a so-called warning against civilian acts of violence. The entire brigade of the Bavarian General Clauss had been held up on the bridge over the Mortagne from sunrise to sunset of the 27th of August, 1914, by a detachment of fifty-four men of the Second Chasseurs; and when they finally broke through, they martyred the helpless hamlet to give vent to their fury at that heroic defense.

Major Massié had entered the army as a physician, but as a captain of infantry he had been in the battle of Verdun and had led his company in attack twenty-one times in twenty-four hours, retaining at the end of the day but one-tenth of his command. This veteran officer attached the American officers to his own mess in order

that the twenty-two French and American officers who were to participate in the raid on the Saillant du Feys might become acquainted. No war talk was permitted at the table — meal-time was reserved as a period of relaxation and sociability — but a short, instructive school was held each evening after dinner.

The chief objective in the raid on the right was a group of dugouts to be attacked by the leading elements of the raiding party. In the Saillant du Feys there was a fortified strong point in the form of a "pill box", located at the crossing of the Neuviller–Bréménil and Badonviller–Montreux roads. This point was the chief defensive position to be overcome by F Company. It was planned to send one platoon down a boyau to draw the fire of the strong point from the front, while another detachment was to work around from the right and fall upon it from the rear.

Company F was fortunate in having open ground for its attack as far as the German wire. It was to advance in two columns on either side of the main road from Neuviller to Bréménil. M Company was not so fortunate. It had to advance its entire distance through brush and woods, maintaining its direction solely by compass reading. Both companies were to continue to the Boche third line — in the case of F Company, 200 meters beyond the cross road — and were to return immediately upon the completion of their mission. It was estimated that the whole operation would take from forty-five minutes to an hour.

The usual reserves were to be provided by the remaining companies of the two French battalions, the sole auxiliary troops furnished by the Americans being a sergeant, two corporals, and ten privates from the

Pioneer Platoon who were to accompany the infantry and aid in the demolition of dugouts and other works. French machine guns, in addition to joining in the barrage, were to advance, one with each of the six columns of each raiding party, into No Man's Land, providing direct flank protection for the attacking troops.

The first plans for the raid contemplated a training period of eight days, but the Americans had taken up the preliminary work with such earnestness and thoroughness that by the 7th of March they were ahead of schedule. No one knew exactly when *J* day would be, but it was thought probable that there would be several days more of drill. In the meantime the French Intelligence Service had gained the information that, in spite of the secrecy surrounding the preparations, the Germans were anticipating an attack and had moved in some additional artillery in counter-preparation. Then came the rumor that the French had decided to hold off the raid for a few days in order to secure more definite details as to the Boche reënforcement.

On the evening of the 7th the usual school of instruction was omitted, and after dinner the French and American officers went to the French Officers' Club for billiards. It had been a tiring day, and all turned in early, expecting a repetition of the maneuver in the morning. But a few minutes after ten o'clock, just when every one was comfortably asleep, a French courier brought the order for the companies to march at eleven o'clock. There were hurried preparations. M Company came down from Badménil, met the battalion from the French 169th, and marched on to Pexonne. The other French battalion, with F Company, proceeded to Vacqueville, the officers and non-coms of both units going on to the trenches to

reconnoiter their positions and the routes to be taken through the wire.

On the preceding day the Second Battalion, and C Company of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, under command of Major Stanley, had relieved the First Battalion in the C. R. Chamois, in front of and to the right of which the raid was to be directed, and the Sanitary troops on duty with the Second Battalion took the place of those with the First Battalion. Company G, commanded by Captain Steller, occupied P. A. Malgré-jean; and Company E, under Captain Yates, held P. A. Colcombet. The First Battalion, on its way to Badménil to recuperate from the effects of its own battle, passed on the road the Third, which was moving up to Neufmaisons. His task completed with great credit, Lieutenant Colonel Tinley now relinquished his temporary command of the First Battalion and reported to Regimental Headquarters at Pexonne for duty.

During the night of March 8th the raiding parties moved up into the trenches, and before daybreak of the 9th had cut lanes through the wire and were concealed in the dugouts and trenches where they would escape enemy observation during the day. Company M was in the reserve trenches of P. A. Colcombet, and F Company in the front line positions at the edge of the village of Neuviller. At noon the final orders, designating five minutes after five as the zero hour, were handed to the unit commanders.

Promptly at five minutes after one the Allied guns burst forth with an impetuosity that brought to the mind the picture of straining dogs suddenly loosed from their leashes. The slamming of the 75's, the dull blasts of trench mortars, the basso profundo of the howitzers, and

the staccato of the machine guns joined together in a harmony of intense sweetness to the ears of the waiting attackers. The gaze was held in fascination by the tremendous spectacle of the destruction of the Boche positions — great trees thrown high into the air as if they were match-sticks; geyser-like upheavals, spouting mud, rock, wire, perhaps human beings; a whole area churning and boiling like an angry sea. One could not but experience a wave of pity for the poor devils that were undergoing so terrible a punishment.

In M Company's sector there was soon a lively reaction by the enemy artillery, and 105's and 150's rained on their front. As every one had been warned of what to expect, most of the men were under cover when the shells began to fall, but the congestion in the trenches had made it impossible for all to get into dugouts. For nearly four hours the hostile fire covered their position, increasing in violence until half past four, when it gradually diminished under our counter-battery fire, to stop almost completely at five o'clock.

For men who had never before even heard the screech of a shell — nothing more than the distant rumbling of the artillery — this was an abrupt introduction. For them there was no gradual process of acclimatization to the abnormal conditions of warfare; they were rudely thrust into the very center of activity. While waiting in the rear, the Third and Fourth Platoons were subjected to a particularly severe fire. A large shell lit near the latter group, wounding several, and another, immediately following, killed Private Cecil M. Conley. Farther down the trench, in the midst of the Third, a burst killed Corporal Albert E. Behmer and Private Fred D. Turner and mortally wounded Private Ted A. Butler. So it was

that M Company was undergoing the refinement of torture of standing up under enemy shell fire with no opportunity to strike back. Much more courage is required to hold on and to keep cool under pitiless bombardment than to go forward to the assault. It is no wonder that men lose their reason from terror of it. But whatever may have been the mental reaction of the Americans that day, they lost neither their grip nor their offensive spirit.

At 4:15 the raiders, laden with grenades, knives, rifles, and extra ammunition, moved from the reserve trenches to the jump-off position. About this time a number of Boche planes appeared, but they were prevented from making observation by an alert group of French planes which drove them off after bringing one of them down near our lines.

At 5:05 Captain Ross, sitting up on the parapet at the point of departure in G. C. 8, blew his whistle for the advance, and the two columns started up the ladders and out over the top into the confusion of wire, brush, and débris of No Man's Land. There was nothing spectacular about this "going over the top"—it lacked all the dash and flourishes that have been impressed on the popular fancy by imaginative illustrators and writers of fiction. One hundred meters in three minutes is about one-third the rate of the regulation marching step, and with a rolling barrage setting the pace, it is not advisable to attempt to beat the schedule.

Lieutenant Briggs led the right column through the lane that had been cut in wire at Soudan, a post then held by the French; and Lieutenant Christopher headed the advanced groups on the left through the gap at Cerf. Following them in half platoon columns came the second

line under Lieutenants McIlvaine and Currie, the third under Lieutenants Van't Hof and Bates, and the last in charge of Lieutenant Ericsson and Sergeant Owen C. Hawkins. Captain Ross talked and joked with the first groups as they filed past him in perfect order, and then he and his company headquarters advanced with the second line.

The enemy opposed the advance with a feeble artillery resistance, for our guns were overwhelming his batteries; but the machine gun fire was lively. However, after our troops had broken through the German first line, the machine gunners fled, not caring to meet us in hand-to-hand combat. The Boche wire was the greatest obstacle, but our men managed to cut through it, and clambering over shell holes, brush, and demolished trenches, pushed on to the objective. In the midst of this, two enemy planes swooped down on the raiders from the right rear and opened up on them with bombs and machine guns. Private Robert Petty was hit seven times by one of the aerial gunners, and Private Leslie Johnson was also wounded. Later Captain Ross discovered Petty in a shell hole, and with the help of Sergeant Oscar Johnson carried him back to our lines at the conclusion of the raid.

The German front line trench, Mecklembourg, was found to be deserted and only slightly damaged, but the trenches of des Hêtres and Weimar had been torn to pieces by our fire. There was little work left for the pioneers, so effective had been the bombardment. The narrow gauge railway, which was the farthermost objective, had been pretty well blown up by our artillery, and the job was completed with a few charges of high explosive.

So far the raid had yielded no prisoners, for the simple

reason that the few Boches who had remained to check our progress could run faster than the Americans. About the time that the railway was reached, Private Max L. Hubbell spied a Heinie climbing down a tree in a distant group of evergreens and start to run back over the hill. Hubbell was quick with his Chauchat and saw his man fall before he gained cover. The M Company men wanted to go on and bring him in, but the more experienced French, knowing better than to advance beyond a prescribed objective, restrained them.

In the area between M Company and the Sixth Company of the French 169th Regiment on the right was a group of German dugouts connected by a trench that swung around the base of the reverse slope. This area had purposely been avoided by our artillery in the hope that some of the enemy would seek refuge in the dugouts where they could be surrounded and captured. The scheme was successful: this small oasis in the desert of destruction furnished the only prisoners taken during the raid.

In coöperation with a group of picked French soldiers, a small volunteer detail led by Sergeant James B. Lepley was assigned the duty of searching the dugouts, and to them came the honor of making the first capture for the 168th. As they approached one of the shelters, a "potato masher" shot out of the entrance. Giving it time to explode harmlessly, the group made a dash for the dugout, and called to the occupants to give themselves up. When the Boches refused, the Americans went down after them.

Sergeant Lepley, with a pistol and flashlight, went first, followed closely by Corporal Claude V. Hart carrying a bag of grenades; and Private Karl O. Pierce and

Bugler Orville G. Fife, with fixed bayonets, brought up the end of the procession. Their sensations were somewhat varied as they felt their way down the steps of the dugout thirty feet underground — excited anticipation at making a bag, and speculation as to what the next two minutes might hold for them. However, nothing more threatening than five frightened Boches huddled up in a far corner greeted them at the bottom. Three surrendered at once and were willing to agree to anything; the other two held back — they were reluctant to leave — and not even the suggestive prod of a bayonet or the encouraging hoist of a No. 9 hobnailed boot would stir them.

There was no time to lose. The three docile captives were led forth and the recalcitrants left to share the incendiary bombs and grenades that were thrown back into the dugout. They had elected to remain there, and in granting them their chosen alternative, the permanency of their stay was insured.

There was no difficulty in getting the prisoners back to our lines — except that they wished to set the pace and had to be held back. When questioned, they stated that they were members of the 9th Uhlan Regiment — thus confirming the presence of the 6th Cavalry Division in this sector. They also indicated that there had been a leak from our side; for on the previous evening, in anticipation of the attack, their colonel had ordered the evacuation of the advanced trenches, leaving only a few lookout men on the spot. The majority of these, however, fled during the destructive fire of our artillery.

Shortly before six o'clock a three-star white rocket, the signal for the return, went up from our lines, and the homeward journey was commenced. The four lines

"leapfrogged" back to our trenches, each one in turn furnishing protection for the withdrawal of the rearmost line as it passed through. This was accomplished through a box barrage which the German artillery put over in an attempt to cut them off and resulted in a number of casualties to our men. Corporal Henry H. Fall was instantly killed by a shell explosion. As his body was being carried back, his bearers, within a short distance of our trench, came across a wounded man in need of immediate assistance. They put down their dead burden to care for the living, and when they returned a few minutes later for the body of the corporal it had disappeared. A thorough search was made then, and again the next day when a patrol under Lieutenant Currie went out, but the body was never discovered, although men of M Company continued their search at frequent intervals until the regiment left the sector in June. The most probable explanation of its mysterious disappearance is that a shell had either struck it or had landed close enough to bury it under a pile of dirt.

Before reaching our trenches Private Lloyd Culp was mortally wounded and Lieutenant Van't Hof was hit in the ankle by a shell fragment, bringing the total casualties of M Company up to six men killed and one officer and twenty-two men wounded.

At the same moment that M Company scaled the parapet at G. C.'s Cerf and Soudan, the men of F Company jumped off from the trenches at the eastern edge of the battered town of Neuviller. They had marched up the night before into what looked like a deserted village, received their supply of grenades under the direction of a French sergeant, who said in good American, "You want to be careful with those things,

buddy'', and had then twisted their way through mud-filled trenches to the front lines where they were assigned their positions for the night.

The morning of the 9th passed quietly. There was no shelling, and the men had nothing to do but keep out of sight. For some time after the opening of the bombardment there was no enemy reply on this part of the front, but about half past two the Germans began to shower it with small calibres and then with 105's and 150's. The fire increased without cessation, reaching its maximum about half past three, when the enemy released a violent barrage fire between the village and the Saillant du Feys. Then the French intensified their counter-battery fire, so that by five o'clock the opposing artillery was completely silenced.

From the first, F Company was exposed to the raking deluge of shells, and as the shelters were scarcely shrapnel proof, the only place to find protection was close to the front walls of the trenches. Captain Casey noticed shells falling with great regularity just over a trench into which twenty-four of his men had been crowded; so he shifted this detachment, and just in the nick of time, for they had hardly cleared when the gunners corrected the range and obliterated the trench, inflicting fatal wounds on Private Fred C. Brummett, the last man out. Other sections were nearly engulfed by the showers of flying dirt and débris; but luck was with them and there were no further casualties, although one 155 came crashing into a small shelter occupied by a dozen men and buried itself in the wall without exploding.

During the anxious wait for the zero hour Colonel MacArthur, the Division Chief of Staff, accompanied by a French staff major, arrived at Captain Casey's post.

After a short conversation with the company commander, the major expressed a wish to go out among the troops and see how they were taking their medicine. He spoke excellent English, and as he walked through the trenches he talked with the men and asked them many questions. Upon his return, he shook hands with the captain, saying, "Sir, I congratulate you on the fine soldiers under your command. They conduct themselves like veterans — never have I seen better morale." Whereupon Colonel MacArthur, with a thrill of pride in his voice, remarked, "Is it any wonder that my father was proud of this regiment?"*

As the time approached, warning was sent through the trenches for every one to be ready. As they all were on their toes for the signal, Private John Anderson, a big, deliberate chap, was seen to climb up on the parapet. When asked rather warmly what he meant by starting out before the whistle blew, he answered, "Well, I'm sort of slow, you know. It takes me longer to get started than most of the boys, and I don't want to be left behind."

The sharp blast of the captain's whistle sent the advance groups over on the dot. At the head were Lieutenant Kelly and Sergeant Manford Overman, followed in turn by the other sections officered by Lieutenants Ford, Thrasher, Fisher, and Chapman. Moving forward in two columns — one fifty meters south of the Neuviller–Brémenil road, the other following the road itself — they found their advance comparatively easy over the open ground up to the German wire, and

*Colonel MacArthur's father, Major General Arthur MacArthur, commanded the regiment as a part of the Second Brigade, Second Division, in the Philippines. When Colonel MacArthur was later advanced to command the 84th Brigade, he, too, had the regiment under his orders.

the liaison patrols had no difficulty in keeping in touch with the French companies on the flanks.

From the trenches they had witnessed through the smoke and dust of battle the dramatic transformation of the Bois du Feys from a living wood into a graveyard of shattered stumps. Now they saw the same powerful force spread its protecting curtain ahead of them, and in spite of the vicious fire from machine guns on the ground and in the air, they felt the rare thrill of confidence that the doughboy experiences when he knows that his own artillery is backing him up for all it is worth.

The German wire was well battered down, and the first elements, which were advancing in open formation, went through without the slightest difficulty. The other columns, circling out for the enveloping movement which was to close in on the pill box at the cross-roads, encountered no opposition and reached the spot to find that our artillery had completely demolished the large concrete defense. Not a living German was left in the entire area—they had literally been blown out of position—and the few dugouts that remained intact were fired with incendiary bombs. In this part of the sector hardly enough of the narrow-gauge railway was left to recognize—just a few twisted rails.

Near the second line one party came across a curious concrete dome to which there was no visible entrance. It was broad and flat and looked as if the original walls of the structure had been cut away, letting the roof fall to the ground. There was no trench near it, and a close scrutiny disclosed no indication of previous occupancy. The French were a bit skeptical as to its existence when the matter was reported to them; and so at a later date they sent out a patrol which confirmed the story told by

the Americans, but no satisfactory explanation of its purpose was ever evolved.

When Company F went over the top, it had in its midst an unexpected guest in the person of Colonel MacArthur. He wore no distinctive uniform, and, as he was unknown to most of the men, he was addressed as "Buddy" or "Say you" and treated as one of the crowd. One of the men in talking with a friend later said, "I saw a guy with a turtle-neck sweater and a cap on (Colonel MacArthur disdained to wear a helmet), and I couldn't figure what a fellow dressed like that could be doin' out there. When I found out who he was, you could have knocked me over with a feather." It is not customary for staff officers to join in on a party of this kind, but this adventure on the part of Colonel MacArthur was typical of the man: he preferred to learn from actual experience rather than from some one else's reports. It was for such as this that the officers and men under him admired and respected him, both then and later when he became the commander of the 84th Brigade.

Their mission complete, the raiding party returned in the same formations that it had used in going out, suffering during the withdrawal their only casualty of the raid proper, when Private Phil H. Newman was wounded. The French, however, had not fared so well: four of their men were killed by machine gun fire from Boche planes which flew low in groups of five over the attacking battalion.

Throughout the operation Major Massié had remained in a small shelter at the edge of Neuviller, receiving the reports which Captain Casey and the French company commanders sent back by runner at frequent intervals. By the time the raiders got back he had learned through

the intelligence service of an impending gas attack, and all the troops, with the exception of the few French necessary to hold the line, were started immediately for the rear.

As they approached St. Maurice, the presence of gas was marked. The enemy had been shelling in the neighborhood, and the heavy vapors had settled in the low ground around the village. Fortunately there were no serious consequences from the exposure to the gas itself, although one or two men did go to the hospital, but many were overcome with nausea and displayed other symptoms of gassing.

Had there been no gas in St. Maurice, F Company would have been spared a particularly distressing tragedy. It had been planned to turn in here the unexpended ammunition that the raiders brought back with them, but on account of the gas it was not considered safe to stop even long enough to do this, and the company pushed on farther to the rear.

Plodding along in the darkness, weary and relaxed after the exertion and strain of the combat, they neared the cross-road just beyond the village. No one was in the mood for talking, and the only sound to break the stillness of the night was the uneven shuffle of heavy feet and the subdued clatter of equipment. Suddenly an explosion at the head of the column brought them to a full stop. A bag of grenades carried by Corporal Clifford J. Stevens had gone off, killing him and Private Edwin C. Todd, wounding six others, and knocking a score to the ground. "Help! Stretcher-bearer! Stretcher-bearer!" was the involuntary, agonizing shriek that went up from struggling bodies, scarcely yet conscious of what had happened. "Oh, God, they're shelling us", some one

screamed; and men who had faced a merciless fire without flinching now broke in sudden panic and confusion. It was like a stab in the back, this unknown and unexpected horror. But the knowledge that men were lying in the road wounded and dying recalled them from their bewilderment, and there was a general rush to their assistance. Two men volunteered to bring medical aid from the nearest infirmary, at Pexonne. Stripping off their equipment, they started out on the run, knowing that every second they clipped off meant that much less suffering for their maimed comrades.

A later examination of the remaining grenades revealed that many of the cotter pins had rusted, leaving but a slight fibre to repress the powerful spring; it is probable that one of these pins working loose had caused the first grenade to explode, which in turn detonated the others.

Including the three casualties to the pioneer detachment during the enemy bombardment, the losses of the regiment in the raid of March 9th amounted to nine men killed and thirty-three wounded. It was very much as General Pershing remarked after receiving reports of the March 5th action, "You were sent to a training area, but you have turned it into a battle field."

F Company spent the night in billets in Vacqueville. Two platoons of M Company, however, remained in the trenches to ward off a possible German counter-attack. A covering patrol in charge of Sergeant Hawkins remained out in front of the position while wiring parties closed up the gaps that had been cut for the raid. The next day these two platoons joined the remainder of the company at Neufmaisons. As it happened, the night of March 9th was the time selected by the Allies for setting

the clocks ahead one hour to summer time; but when the clocks skipped an hour at 11 P. M., the returned raiders never stirred in their sleep — they knew that reveille for the rest meant only six o'clock for them.

Following this action, Colonel MacArthur and Captains Ross and Casey were awarded both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre, and a generous distribution of the latter decoration was made by the French authorities to the section leaders and men who especially distinguished themselves in the fight.

The event was officially closed by the report of Colonel Girard, Commander of the Infantry of the French 128th Division, whose concluding paragraph stated:

> The American officers and soldiers conducted themselves superbly, rivaling our own in dash. In spite of the bombardment of the assembling places during which they suffered losses, they maintained their coolness, and at the zero hour proceeded to the assault with the most splendid bravery.

XIII

FILLING OUT THE FIRST MONTH

Following the raid of the 9th of March there were no further activities on a large scale until after the regiment had completed its first month of training. There was the constant work of repairing demolished defenses: whole sections of trenches had to be excavated, revetted, and drained; wire entanglements set up anew; duckboards built and laid; and P. C. Malgréjean, which had been so badly shot up on the 5th, had to be abandoned and an entirely new dugout constructed in its place. It was days before the damage created by the two raids was mended and the system restored to normal order.

During this term patrolling was pursued with increasing energy and daring, and the advantage won by driving the enemy from his front lines was maintained. Day and night, patrols prevented him from repairing or reoccupying the deserted area; and as soon as any new German works were discovered, they were promptly destroyed either by the infantry or by the artillery.

It had been planned to send detachments from both F and M Companies to revisit the localities attacked by them on the raid, but the reconnaissance by F Company was cancelled on the night of the 10th when it had been definitely ascertained that the Boche had entirely abandoned the Bois du Feys. Late that afternoon Captain Ross was ordered to send two platoons to Pexonne in preparation for the follow-up raid to be carried out in concert with a platoon of French. There were but two

platoons of M Company in Neufmaisons when the captain called for volunteers, and as every man of them stepped forward, he selected eighty for the job. That night the party, under the command of Lieutenants Christopher and Currie, marched up to Badonviller, and at half past three in the morning slipped out into No Man's Land, taking position in front of the German wire opposite G. C.'s 8 and 9. At a quarter past five, following a twenty-minute bombardment by our guns, the Allied soldiers rushed the enemy trenches. They found no Boches and no indications that they had made any attempt to reoccupy their old positions; and so, learning in a few minutes all they had been sent to find out, the raiders returned to our lines without having lost a man.

On the 8th of March, Captain Steller of G Company had received a shrapnel wound in the head which, although slight, affected his eyesight and incapacitated him from further line duty. Command of G Company then passed to First Lieutenant Frank B. Younkin. On the 10th this company was relieved in the P. A. Malgré-jean by H Company with Lieutenants Douglas B. Green and Andrew J. McKeon in charge of the front line platoons. Because of F Company's participation in the raid, E was forced to stand a double tour in P. A. Colcombet.

At this time the various sanitary units were busy instructing the Band and company details in first aid and litter-bearer work, so that they could handle the wounded with a maximum of efficiency. When Major Conkling first asked for the details from each company, some of the captains thought it a good opportunity to get rid of their less desirable men. After viewing the men thus chosen, the commander of the Sanitary Detachment

called the company commanders together. "These are the men who will carry you back when you are wounded", he said. "Are you satisfied that you have chosen the right men? Go back and think it over." As a result, the huskiest and most dependable men in the companies reported for instruction the following day. This lesson was not lost upon the company commanders, and thereafter, as a matter of established policy, when called upon for details, they sent of their best.

If the Divisional Intelligence reports are to be relied upon, the patrols of the 168th Infantry were far more active than those of the other three regiments. This was probably due to the more favorable terrain and greater proximity of the lines in our sector. Every night at least one party was sent out to scour No Man's Land or to lie in ambush, on occasion even occupying the abandoned German trenches for periods of twenty-four hours or more and taking rations with them in order to establish semi-permanent outpost positions.

"Patrol returned without incident" was the entry on many a regimental intelligence report; but no patrol ever crawled out through the wire without a lively hope for a mix-up with the Boche. Men who volunteered for this work were of the type that took keen delight in the varied and shifting sensations which made a night on duty a vivid and intense experience, whether the intelligence officer reported an "incident" or not. How swiftly a semi-tragic situation could be converted into one of comedy, and how easily a nervous outpost in our own lines could prove more dangerous than the enemy, is suggested by the following account of a patrol member:

The lieutenant steps into the dugout and yells out, "Who will go on a patrol tonight over in G. C. 9?" and everybody says, "I

will''. ''Well'', he says, ''I only want twelve of you'', and I happened to get to go along. We lined up about dusk, blacked up our faces, and then the lieutenant tells all about what kind of a patrol it is, and says, ''Now, boys, you will have to be pretty damn quiet, for if you make the least bit of noise, Hell will be a-poppin'.'' So, startin' out we climbed over barbed wire, shell holes, stumps, brush, and everything else till we got to the place where we was to operate. Then the lieutenant says to me, ''Now, Cecil, you go out that trench and watch, and if anyone starts up the trench, let him get up to where you can drop a grenade on him, then throw your grenade and say, 'Halt!' and more than likely he will stop.''

Well, I sat out in that trench for about an hour, feelin' sort of lonesome in the dark, and then the lieutenant comes along and says, ''We are going to advance a hundred yards'', so we started forward and took cover in some shell holes.

All of a sudden the lieutenant looks up, and says in a whisper, ''Look over there; if that ain't a Dutchman, I'll eat my shirt.'' So, leavin' me and one other of the fellows to cover the Boche with our rifles, he takes a sergeant and a corporal and goes out to capture him. They crawled along careful, and when they got to where they could see plain, they found out that it was only a stump. When the lieutenant got back to where the boys was hidden around behind stumps and rocks and everything, he says, ''What do you know — that wasn't nothing but a damned old stump! I caught my coat on a wire and nearly tore my clothes off and made a lot of noise, and there wasn't no German to capture, after all.''

Then the lieutenant looks at his watch and says, ''Well, we'd better be getting back.'' When we got near our trenches, he gives a sharp whistle, and the answer was returned by one of the boys on post. One of the bunch was just sayin' that we hadn't had no excitement when Bang! goes a grenade close to us and someone in the front line fires his rifle. The way we made for those trenches sounded like a bunch of hogs goin' over a bridge.

One of these patrols, in coöperation with the French, moved into the abandoned Mecklembourg trench on the night of the 11th of March in the hope of capturing any curious Germans that might be led to investigate their lost position. But the enemy learned of the reception arranged for him, and early in the morning dropped such a heavy barrage on the men that they were forced to withdraw. As they approached our lines, they were suddenly deluged with shells from our own artillery. In the half-light of the breaking day, the Americans scattered and made their way back individually without any loss; but the French were not so fortunate. It was later discovered that the American artillery had opened up in response to a barrage rocket sent up from G. C. 10 by a panicky officer who had interpreted a burst of German machine gun fire as the prelude to an attack. This was absolutely inexcusable, for the entire front had been notified of the operation of the patrol, and the usual warnings to refrain from sending up flares or firing in that particular sector had been issued. It was a case where one man's nerves proved too much for him, demonstrating that he was temperamentally unfit for line service — something that could be proved only by actual exposure to the conditions of the front.

The next night the badly mutilated body of a French soldier was recovered by Privates Heller and Allen of E Company, who volunteered to go out into No Man's Land for it. The body had been reported by the French to be that of an American, and it was not established until the next day, the thirteenth, that it was a Frenchman who had been killed by our barrage.

On the night of the 12th a patrol led by Lieutenant Wallace of E Company came across the body of a German

soldier about a hundred yards to the northeast of G. C. 11, and the following night it was brought in by a detail from H Company. The importance of identifications was not fully realized at this time; and as the body was somewhat "whiff", it was given a perfunctory burial in the most convenient spot without making close examination. When the intelligence department learned of the fact, it was surmised from the location and the condition of the body that it was most probably that of one of the Germans who raided G. C. 11 on the 5th of March. Lieutenant Wright, Regimental Intelligence Officer, had the body exhumed, and from books and papers found in the clothes identified the 15th Bavarian Sturm Battalion of the German Army Detachment "A" as the raiding unit.

At intervals this long-since dead and highly prized souvenir was obligingly uncovered and put on exhibit for the benefit of inquisitive visitors to G. C. 11 — that is, until Chaplain Robb heard of it. Shocked by the apparent heartlessness of the procedure, he had the body taken to the rear and gave it a more Christian-like interment.

Throughout the first month considerable annoyance was caused along our front by enemy snipers. As they were using silencers on their high-powered rifles, it was a difficult matter to locate them. In some places it was exceedingly unsafe to raise the head above the parapet, even a little bit. A sharpshooter, operating from somewhere in the woods in front of G. C.'s 8 and 9, had spotted several places in our line where men were forced to expose themselves as they passed from one post to another. One of these was on the route from P. A. 5 to the front line where the communication trench straddled

a brook, and our men soon learned that it was safer to take this particular stretch on the run.

At noon on the 12th of March, Bugler Harry L. Anderson of H Company was shot through the heart and instantly killed as he was standing near the entrance of the dugout at G. C. 12. He had just brought up a batch of mail from company headquarters, and was talking with one of the men when he uttered a sharp cry and fell to the ground. There had been no report — just the zing of the bullet as it sped toward its victim. The fact that he could not have been visible from the German front line where he was standing led many to believe that the Boche who killed him was working from somewhere behind our own lines, and this greatly increased the apprehension of the members of the post.

On that same afternoon Private Ernest S. Van de Mark of E Company essayed to peek over the parapet at G. C. 9, and a vigilant sniper in the wood opposite sent a bullet through his helmet. Luckily, it merely furrowed the surface of his skull and went out through the back of his helmet. After a few easy weeks in a comfortable hospital, he returned to his outfit. These two were the first casualties of E and H Companies.

Between the 8th and the 20th of March the regiment received its first replacements. The 41st Division sent us 187 husky National Guardsmen from the West who were distributed among the companies as needed. Thirty-four others from scattered units joined a week or so later. In addition, eighteen officers who had received their commissions at the second training camp in the States were attached.

The Third Battalion, supported by Company B, 149th Machine Gun Battalion, went into the line on March 14th,

relieving the Second Battalion. Company K, in command of Captain Hupp, took over the left of Chamois, with Lieutenant Timothy and the Fourth Platoon in G. C. 11, and Lieutenant Bradley's First Platoon in G. C. 12. L Company relieved E in Colcombet, Captain Powell sending the First and Second Platoons, under Lieutenants Bernard C. Wolcott and Mahlon D. Wallace, to the front line positions.

The Boche attempted a small-scale silent raid in one of the posts in G. C. 10 about dawn on the 16th. As a French patrol had been reported working in that area and was expected to come in somewhere in the vicinity, Private W. L. Johnson of L Company was not particularly alarmed when he dimly made out five figures approaching his station, especially since they were wearing French helmets. Four of them dropped noiselessly into the trench — then the fifth. While he waited for them to come within challenging distance, a machine gun from the center of the party sent a stream of bullets sizzling about him. Johnson kept his wits and replied with two clips from his Chauchat. By that time Lieutenant Wallace and Sergeants Bruner, Ford, and Bunyan came up on the run, and silenced the would-be raiders with a barrage of grenades. Within a few seconds the Germans disappeared as suddenly and as quietly as they had come.

The next diversion of the regiment was the operation known as the St. Patrick's Day Raid. Our observers had noticed signs of enemy construction work in the German second line in the region covered by the attack of March 9th, and a party of seventeen men from K Company and eight from I were chosen to pay a brief visit to the spot,

discover what the Boche was up to, and to destroy anything that he had built.

It may have been a chance selection, but there was a striking representation of men of Irish descent among the group that blew up the German works on the evening of the 17th of March. Captain Lloyd C. Dunn of I Company was in command, and Lieutenant Cotter of K was in charge of the advance party. Lieutenant Briggs covered the left flank with a detachment of ten men from M Company, and one officer and seventeen men from the French took care of the right.

In the middle of the afternoon the raiders worked out into No Man's Land, advancing under cover of shell holes and old trenches up to the German wire. Beginning at a quarter after five, our artillery unlatched a violent fire with 75's and trench mortars on the position for nearly an hour, followed, after a half-hour interval, by another barrage of five minutes' duration. Then the Americans made for the Boche lines, entering at the juncture of Mecklembourg and the Neuburg communication trench. As they turned to the right into the second line trench, the French moved in the same direction into the front line.

The Americans found themselves on a reverse slope and under heavy machine gun fire from the German third line across a slight dip where the Boche seemed to be gathered in strength, and from the Bayreuth trench on the left. The trenches were badly battered from our fire, but still offered considerable protection; and as our men kept low, none of them were hit.

Seven elaborate and well-constructed dugouts were discovered and destroyed by grenades and incendiary bombs. One anxious youth, whose intentions were better than his aim, tossed a bomb at a dugout mouth, but it

missed the mark and, glancing off the side, fell at the feet of Lieutenant Cotter. In a second the air was thick with blazing bits of phosphorus, and before he knew it the lieutenant's breeches were on fire. The situation was desperate, as there were no barrels available, but by a concerted effort the conflagration was extinguished before any irremediable harm was done.

More important than the destruction of the dugouts was the discovery of ladders in the Boche trenches — an indication of further aggressive designs on the part of the enemy. However, none of the Germans were encountered, since they had as usual withdrawn at the opening of our destructive fire. And so, after twenty busy minutes, the party returned to our lines by way of PSB, the point from which they had left. On the way back the hostile artillery let loose on them, and continued to shell G. C. 9 heavily for about twenty-five minutes. Three men from K Company, Mechanic Hall, and Privates Donald A. Gerard and Byron H. Doan, were wounded by this fire after they had gained our line, and Private Lloyd L. Morrill of M Company was killed just as he was coming over the parapet. Corporal Russell G. Hughes, an L Company man on duty at an observation post on G. C. 9, was killed by the direct hit of an enemy shell. He was the first member of this organization to be killed in action.

On the following day a relief was effected within the battalion. Captain Dunn assumed command of P. A. Malgréjean, with Lieutenant Albert K. Lucas in G. C. 11 and Lieutenant Charles W. Butler in G. C. 12. Captain Ross took over Colcombet from L Company, assigning Lieutenants Currie and McIlvaine to G. C.'s Cerf and Chevreuil. The day was marked by a noticeable increase

in the enemy artillery fire, and it was not lost upon the observers that the Boche was registering generally throughout the sector; nor was the presence of the ladders in the German lines forgotten. Early the next morning there was a general alert, as the French in some manner had learned of an attack that was expected to materialize at that time. Colonel Allié directed the troops in the line to stand-to from four until six; and in compliance with his orders a preventive fire of V. B. rifle grenades was laid down before our positions, commencing at 5:00 A. M. and continuing until daylight. Either this evidence of preparation scared off the enemy or the French intelligence was in error, for no attack developed. But the German guns showered the district liberally with high explosive and shrapnel, and in Pexonne killed the mother of a young family and wounded the father who had just come home on leave.

That forenoon the regiment had a distinguished visitor. Secretary of War Baker, who had recently arrived in France for a tour of inspection, made the round of our front line positions and saw under war conditions the men whom he had reviewed the previous fall at Camp Mills. He expressed himself as thoroughly satisfied with our methods of defense, and delighted with the excellent state of morale.

For some time there had been rumors of spies in the vicinity of Badonviller — an idea, perhaps not altogether unfounded, that persisted as long as the regiment remained in the sector. It was spies who warned the enemy of our attacks, who kept him advised of our movements, who gave away our battery positions. They were supposedly in communication with the Boche by means of concealed telephones, carrier pigeons, dogs, and signals.

It must be remembered that Badonviller was but a few kilometers from the frontier, and it is quite possible that the surrounding country did harbor certain individuals of distinct German sympathies. At any rate, that was the rumor and there was no refuting it.

The matter of mysterious signalings was brought to a head on the 19th when a number of people, including Lieutenant Germain, the French Liaison Officer, saw a rocket go up from a point in the ruins opposite the infirmary in Badonviller. The Battalion Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant Ihrie, was immediately dispatched to investigate. Surrounding the place with a guard, he gathered together a patrol of eighteen men for the purpose of giving the buildings a thorough search; and while they were lined up in the street receiving their instructions, another rocket went up from the same direction. The guard at the rear declared that it had been fired from a walled enclosure back of the ruins and that no one had left from there. The patrol then combed every inch of the suspected area, but not a soul was found. Whoever had sent up the rockets had vanished into the thin air.

Up to this time the command had been somewhat inclined to doubt as apocryphal these reports of signaling — laying it to a mild form of hysteria — but now the fact was established. Special sentinels were posted for the sole purpose of detecting further attempts to communicate with the enemy, but entirely without results, although reports of fancied or actual signaling continued to drift into Headquarters from time to time. Not until the last civilian had departed from Badonviller, several weeks later, did the general suspicion against them cease.

It was during the tour of I Company that a man was

lost through his lack of familiarity with the labyrinthic turnings and branchings of the trench system. Only those who have had to find their way about in them know how confusing they are at first. They all look alike, and one seldom sees them in perspective, or is able to orient himself by observation; at night it is worse. Two days after the company went into the line Private Harry J. Clarke was taken sick and ordered to report at the infirmary in town. After examination the doctor tagged him for the hospital, and sent him back to his post for his equipment. Bewildered in the maze, he wandered into an abandoned trench leading out into No Man's Land. Before he could find his way out, he was struck by a German shell and was either killed outright or so badly wounded that he could not help himself. After some time he was reported missing, and searching parties were sent out to look for him; but he seemed to have mysteriously disappeared, for not a trace of him could be found.

Fifteen days later, while a detachment of the 117th Engineers was repairing the wire in front of our lines, Private Kimball happened to pass through the old trench in which the body of Clarke lay. It was so covered with mud and dirt that he took it at first for a sandbag, but a tell-tale glint led him to investigate and uncover the missing man. The body was brought back to Badonviller where it was identified, and was then taken to Pexonne to be buried in the military cemetery by Chaplain Robb.

A novel and exciting experience was offered a detachment of Americans on the afternoon of the 20th of March when a party consisting of three platoons of French and thirty men of L Company under Lieutenant Jones (the whole being commanded by a captain from the French

ADVANCED POST IN FRONT OF G. C. 9, MARCH 15, 1918

PATROL OF THE 168TH UNDER LIEUTENANT WRIGHT
LEAVING GERMAN SECOND LINE TRENCH MARCH 16, 1918

PARTY FROM K COMPANY UNDER LIEUTENANT COTTER CLIMBING OUT INTO NO MAN'S LAND DURING RAID OF MARCH 17TH

OVER THE TOP ON THE RAID OF MARCH 17TH. PICTURE TAKEN FROM SHELL HOLE IN NO MAN'S LAND

169th Infantry) went over to spend thirty-six hours in the abandoned German second line trenches.

The mission of the patrol, as explained to Lieutenant Jones, was to observe certain works reported in that vicinity and if possible to take prisoners — although the latter was a secondary object. They were instructed to keep out of sight during the day of the 21st, but to keep eyes and ears open to take in everything that happened. But the inconsistent part of the operation was that it was preceded by a barrage, most obviously contrary to the purpose; for, if the mission were to be successful, it was necessary to keep the enemy in ignorance of our presence; whereas the barrage advertised our intention and put him on his guard.

After a half-hour wait in the drizzling rain while our artillery pounded the Boche positions, the party started through the woods in single file, the French leading and the Americans bringing up the rear. They had not gone very far when the sound of firing at the head of the column indicated trouble; the advance guard had seen a small German patrol, but had little difficulty in running it off.

This brush with the enemy altered the plans of our patrol. Fearing that the Boches might still be waiting, and not wanting them to learn just where they intended to station themselves, our men halted in the Mecklembourg trench until dark, when they moved up into the Hêtres trench in the second line, and made ready for the night. Lieutenant Jones' platoon was on the left, and the first thing they did was to set up temporary barricades and post auto-rifle squads to protect the flanks. After establishing lookouts, the rest sat down to

make a belated meal from their reserve rations and to await developments.

From the beginning the men were on their toes, for their heralded entry was an invitation to the Boche to seek them out; and the knowledge that the chances of attack were almost certain kept them keyed up to the highest pitch — they must be alert to counter any thrust or ruse of the enemy. For several hours they waited anxiously, fearfully; and then about eleven o'clock the Germans came at them from the flank, hurling grenades and covering the trench with machine guns. The Huns knew just where our men were, but the Americans could only guess at the position of the enemy from the flashes of their guns. It was pitch black, and the heavy atmosphere held the smoke in a solid blanket, so that in a few moments it was impossible to see either friend or foe. However, it was a short though lively encounter, and the Germans finally withdrew. Two of our men, Privates Harvey A. Breitenstein and Edward H. Monahan, both of Sioux City, were wounded in the skirmish: the former had several fingers torn off by a grenade fragment; the latter was hit by a grenade that shattered his left leg, and machine gun bullets had broken his left arm. Although mortally wounded and fully conscious of his condition, Monahan refused to be considered out of the scrap. As he lay in the bottom of the trench, he encouraged the men fighting above him. "If they get too strong for you", he said, "give me some grenades — my right arm is still good." Later, while being carried back on a stretcher, he jollied the stretcher-bearers, as if to divert their minds from his suffering. "Hip-te-diddy, it's a grand old life if you don't weaken", he smilingly informed them. By sheer power of will he fought off death for ten days,

keeping his courage high and his spirit unbroken to the end.

It must be admitted that the occupants of Hêtres did not look forward to the next move of the enemy with any degree of pleasure. For some, the next few hours were filled with frank terror, which was dissipated the moment grenades again began to burst about them. For at three in the morning the Boche made a second and more determined attempt on the American flank to drive out the presumptuous Yankees who had the audacity to camp out in his own trenches. For thirty minutes or more the outcome was in doubt, and then the Germans, giving up hope for the time being of expelling the intruders, retired without having got close enough to inflict any casualties on us.

At dawn the French captain declared that the object of the patrol had been frustrated and gave the order to return to our lines. It is true that by returning twenty-four hours sooner than had been planned, they had failed in the attempt to learn of the activities of the enemy and to bring back prisoners; but the fact that they had whipped the Boche in his own territory greatly increased the confidence of the Americans, and it was an experience from which they later profited.

There were sufficient amusing incidents and light moments during the first month's tour in the trenches to somewhat soften, at least in retrospect, the bitter first impressions of war. Rockets were responsible for some of the entertainment. At each of the front line posts was a collection of six or seven kinds of rockets, varying as to color and type. A green rocket signified the presence of gas; a red one with six stars, call for barrage; a white one with six stars, lengthen the barrage, and so on.

These rockets bore practically no markings, although the French by some uncanny intuition seemed to divine what each contained, and it was only after considerable difficulty that the American officers were able to classify them.

In order that the rockets might be ready for immediate use, there was a rack near the P. C. with one or two in place waiting for the match. G. C. 11 had an especially elaborate rack, with places for six rockets. They were so close together that one night early in the month when Lieutenant Smith of B Company touched off a green one, in order to relay a gas signal to the rear, each fuse in succession caught fire, and there streamed into the quiet heavens a pyrotechnic display that would have been a credit to any Fourth of July celebration.

The first thought of the observers along the line was that the crucial moment of the Great War had arrived. Common sense, however, saved the situation; the artillery did not open up with the various forms of barrage that had been called for; and before calling out the reserves, the officers at Headquarters waited for further confirmation of the startling news that the enemy was attacking with everything from gas to tanks.

One or two incidents which furnished the trench story of the day are worthy of note as examples of the power of suggestion. There was one man who had not the slightest confidence in the English respirator; he said that he knew it was no good, and repeatedly stated that he would be gassed whether he wore it or not. One clear night during his first turn in the front line the gas alarm sounded. With trembling hands he immediately adjusted his mask. In a few minutes he was exhibiting all the symptoms of gassing — he choked, his eyes began to

water, and finally he fell to the ground, writhing and groaning. At that juncture it was announced that the alarm was false.

On the occasion of another false alarm a sentry came along the trench of the P. C. wearing a French mask (this was the vile-smelling contraption antedating the French box respirator, and which caused many to prefer, or at least to state that they preferred, death by gassing) from which an eyepiece was missing. By keeping that eye tightly closed he thought he was protecting himself from danger, but he applied for a new eyepiece because he was tired of keeping his eye shut.

It required more experience than this first month offered to teach the curious and the careless that the first rule in the modern warfare game of hide and seek is to keep out of sight. In imitating the apparent freedom of the French soldiers the Americans failed to appreciate, at first, that the Frenchman, with his natural military instinct and his longer training, was after all really very careful about exposing himself when there was danger of being observed. When there appeared in our intelligence reports such items as that of March 17th, "A periscope has been noticed behind the chimney of the house at 36.43", it could be inferred that the enemy was not taking any long chances in offering himself as a target for the already highly respected Springfield, and "under cover" began to have a real significance.

It was all a part of the day's work, this spying back and forth, although one officer, in the line for the first time, considered it in the light of a personal affront. "There are two German balloons up, watching every move I make", he wrote back to his company commander.

"Don't worry, I'll have them taken down right away", the captain answered.

Speaking of affronts, a German officer of unknown identity might have felt occasion for a personal grudge against the American observer who, as a result of the diligent use of his high-powered glass, was able to furnish the Divisional *Summary of Intelligence* with the following morsel: "One woman and one German officer on Halloville Road, disappeared into dugout 5545 at 10:30 a. m."

In practice back of the line, guard duty and patrolling were simple matters: it was merely a matter of following the drill regulations and its formulas. But up in the line — on a dark rainy night, with the point of a bayonet about a half inch away, and a nervous man's finger fidgeting at the trigger — there was an element of adventure in even so simple a matter as giving the password, and giving it quickly. It was well enough to stick to regulations, but the important thing was to satisfy the man at the other end of the gun.

One night Private W. H. Miller of F Company was hustling down the trench when he was abruptly halted by a sentry.

"Who's there?" cried the sentry in a business-like voice.

"Miller" (a pause — no answer from the sentry).

"One man", volunteered Miller, thinking of the trigger of the gun pointed in his direction from somewhere there in the dark.

"Patrol", he finally added to ward off any hasty action.

"All right, advance, Miller, the one-man patrol."

A somewhat similar experience came to one of the first liaison patrols to visit the 167th Infantry post on the left

of the Chamois sector. These patrols made two or three trips each night to link up the gap between the two regiments. On this occasion the Iowa patrol was halted by the customary "Halt, who is there?"

"Patrol", was the reply.

"Who's there?"— this time a bit more emphatically.

"Patrol with the password", was the conciliating answer.

"Who's there?" rang out again in an angry tone.

"Patrol with the password, 'United States' ", the leader quickly returned.

"I didn't say WHAT IS, I said WHO IS", insisted the guard heatedly.

"Why this is just some of the Iowa boys."

"Well why in Hell didn't you say so the first time?" said the guard in a friendly accent. "All right, BIG BOY, come on in."

A report of the number of rounds of ammunition and the number of grenades expended at each G. C. was sent in to headquarters every twenty-four hours, but no record was kept of the causes of the expenditure. If an analysis of the ammunition used by the regiment during that first month were made on this basis, it would be found that a startling number of shots were fired at promenading rats and stray cats, or at the ubiquitous something that somebody thought he saw. While the men were learning that the enemy infantry didn't really come over every day for a hand-to-hand fight, they were also learning that a false alarm was an easy thing to start and a difficult thing to stop. A rat scampering along the parapet or a cat breaking a twig out in front of the wire was enough to set off a burst of fire a half mile long.

One day while I Company was holding the front, a

report reached the P. C. at G. C. 11 that the enemy was attacking in force on the left of the position. A few shots had been heard from that direction, and word was passed along to all the posts to open fire immediately. A barrage rocket was sent up, and in a few minutes there was a fine young battle in progress. When no enemy appeared, an investigation was instituted. The report of the attack was traced back through the sergeant, a corporal, and two or three guards, until it was finally settled on the man who had fired the first shot.

"What did you fire at?" the officer inquired.

"I saw something out there", replied the man on post.

"Well, just what was it that you saw?"

"I thought I saw a Heinie", the man answered with a sheepish grin, "but after I had fired, I found that it was only a butterfly."

So this became known as the Battle of the Butterflies, and while it lasted it was one of the hottest engagements of the "Pas-Boche Guerre".

The enemy artillery was increasingly active during the latter half of this period, shelling town, roads, trenches, and artillery positions with a viciousness that belied the name of "quiet sector". No one was immune from its fury — front line garrisons, working parties, carrying details, supply trains, reserve troops — anyone or anything that happened to be in the path. This "strafing" on the part of the enemy culminated in the bombardment of the 21st, the heaviest general shelling the sector received while the 168th was in occupation. The front line for once escaped, but the rear areas were deluged with a continuous stream of high explosive. It looked as if the Boches were preparing for a general attack, an indication that caused no little concern at Headquarters;

but as it turned out, it was merely part of the demonstration all along the line from the North Sea to the Swiss border to divert attention from the great attack launched against the British before Amiens — an attack that was to affect the destinies of the Rainbow Division.

Now that each of the three battalions had tasted of the life of the trenches, the preliminary training of the regiment was declared to be at an end and orders appeared for its relief. Already on the 20th, the First Battalion, which had been quartered in Badménil since the 6th, had moved on southwest to the village of Bru, and the next day, while the Second was leaving the support position for Baccarat, it went on to Housseras where it was later joined by the Machine Gun Company.

Finally, on the 22nd, the Third Battalion surrendered the Chamois sector to the French 169th Infantry and started for the rear, making Baccarat before nightfall. E, G, and H Companies meanwhile ended their march at Jeanménil where Regimental Headquarters and the Supply and Headquarters Companies were also stationed, while F Company went on a few kilometers to Larifontaine. On the 23rd the Third Battalion, with the exception of M Company, which was stationed at Fraipertuis, halted in the little hamlet of Bru.

In this one month of training the 168th learned more about the rough and ready practical conduct of war than two years of drill and practice and study behind the lines could have given it. They had learned that many of the nicely adjusted plans and rules laid down in books and lectures are hardly recognizable when interpreted in terms of actual service. They had learned how potently the personal equation asserts itself in the line, and had discovered that it was necessary to readjust their

estimates of men on the basis of new standards. Men with established reputations in garrison life found themselves in unexpected competition with men who had shown little aptitude for the monotony of drill and parade, but who met the problems of line service with courage, intelligence, and an active sense of responsibility. Even though some of the units had experienced but a few days' contact with the enemy, it was sufficient for a test; and it was with renewed confidence in its own power that the 168th settled down for the final training that was to fit it for offensive action.

That this confidence was not altogether unfounded, and that their French comrades had faith in the 168th, is attested by the following gracious letter addressed to the regiment by its good friend, Colonel Allié, just five years from the day he first assumed command of the 168th:

To the American 168th Infantry Regiment:

It was not without emotion that I learned in February, 1918, of the honor that had been reserved for me — to have in the trenches, under my command, an American regiment; nor was it without a certain anxiety.

How would these green troops withstand the privations and the danger? Would their officers submit to the orders of a foreign chief? My anxiety was short-lived, my relief complete. Not only did I find among them a discipline to which was joined the desire to learn, but a scrupulous obedience in executing their orders down to the smallest detail, and the enemy was soon to furnish me, as well as himself, the irrefutable proof of the valor of those who had crossed the Atlantic in order to come to the aid of their endangered brothers. I learned that day that victory was close at hand, and that was the cause of my exultation.

The enemy did not disregard the change on his front, and for those who had the effrontery to come to help in disputing with him the victory, he prepared his vengeance . . . .

A silence all too profound in a black night was but the precursor of the storm that I had foreseen. Suddenly the silence was broken, and the darkness rent by lightnings flashing from everywhere: it was the attack. Our batteries answer; soon it is nothing but one great conflagration accompanied by the hoarse barkings of the guns. It means the destruction of the trenches and of those in them. The Germans do things on a grand scale.

A terrible anguish seizes me, for it is the baptism of fire for these new troops, and what a baptism! I know only too well the horror of bombardment, and the firmness of heart that is required to stand up under its overwhelming force without being able to strike back. But soon the calm voice of Colonel Tinley comes to dissipate my fear: "Every man of the 168th is at his post, and will remain there."

Until daybreak these valiant troops, worthy of their seniors in battle, in spite of their losses, stoically and with heroism, endured the torture of the danger which one can neither escape nor reply to, and at dawn, when the enemy attempted to penetrate our lines, he found someone to argue with; the 168th was there.

That day, going through the trenches still filled with its victims, scarcely cold, in the midst of this valorous youth which eyed me with pride, throbbing with daring and vibrant courage, I learned that victory was assured, that with such auxiliaries, there might be fluctuations, but the day would surely come when the enemy would sue for mercy and pardon for the death of this heroic youth to which France owes its greatest gratitude, and for the calculated cruelty of his useless devastations.

The other side, too, learned that day of the gravity of their situation, for although they had not been able to break through our lines, a few days later, bursting with eagerness and the desire to conquer, the 168th entered theirs.

I owe to this brilliant regiment this acknowledgment of my gratitude, "They came, not to win a war, but a cause."

Grant that the sacrifice of the 700 dead of the 168th, and of their comrades who rest in our land of France, shall not have been vain. But we shall never forget what we owe them.

As for me, it is a great honor to be remembered in the history of a regiment which commanded my deepest admiration, and it is in order to bear witness to that fact that I address to it these lines in remembrance of the days of Glory passed at their side from the 23rd of February to the 22nd of March, 1918.

COLONEL G. ALLIÉ
Commandeur de la légion d'honneur

Paris, France,
23 February, 1923

XIV

THE 168TH RETURNS TO THE LINE

After four weeks in the trenches, now that they were back where they could relax and temporarily forget the war, it was too much to expect the men to be serious, and the few days spent in the Rambervillers area were wisely given over to resting, cleaning, and feeding up in preparation for the extended maneuvers and long hike to the Rolampont area where their training was to receive its finishing touches. Reveille was set ahead an hour, but in order to keep the command up to the mark, and to remind the men that they were still in the army, a light schedule of drill was instituted. This, however, left the greater part of the day for play.

Spring had come almost over night: the trees were budding, the first flowers were out, and the wide meadows turned to rich carpets of green. A warm sun and a gentle breeze had forced their way out of the gloom of the past month to make the country seem like a paradise. The companies were hardly settled in their billets before a hundred men were stripping in the sunlit fields and splashing in the gurgling, spring-fed brooks that curled their inviting courses between grassy banks — the first real bath for any of them since leaving the States. What a time they had, rubbing and scrubbing, and how their lithe bodies, glowing rosy, glistened in the sparkling sunlight. The war seemed far away then, and it was good to be alive — to be thoroughly clean once more, to

sprawl out luxuriously in the soft grass, and to breathe fresh, untainted air.

This area marked the limit of the farthest Boche advance in 1914, and the several villages in which the regiment was quartered were practically intact. It was a region of well-kept roads, lovely woods, garden-like farms, and kindly people — an almost overwhelming contrast to the sordid *mise en scène* of the front. And it was far enough away from the battle line to engender a feeling of absolute security, although, if one strained the ear when the wind was blowing from the east, he could detect the faint rumbling, at dusk, of the guns in the Vosges. In the opposite direction, several kilometers up the straight, tree-lined *route nationale,* the neat, venerable town of Rambervillers, with its tempting shops and cafés and its cosmopolitan crowd of Hindus, Annamese, English, Italians, French, and Americans, offered distraction for the eager doughboy off duty.

On Palm Sunday, the 24th of March, a number of officers and men from F and M Companies were decorated at Jeanménil with the Croix de Guerre in recognition of their services in the raid of the 9th, and this concluded the official presentation of awards by the French for the first tour in the trenches. Six days previous Lieutenant Colonel Tinley, in company with Colonel MacArthur, had received his decoration from the hands of General de Bazelaire, the Commander of the French 7th Army Corps, in an impressive ceremony at Croixmare.

Captain Ross, one of the honorees, had that morning taken over the command of the First Battalion from Captain Aikins, who had been steering its course since Lieutenant Colonel Tinley had relinquished command. A few days before, First Lieutenant Joyce Wickersham,

who had been commanding B Company since the death of Captain McHenry, surrendered his charge to Lieutenant William A. Kelly of F Company, who had been with the regiment during the Philippine campaign in 1899. Lieutenant Kelly received his captaincy on the 30th. B Company had lost another officer in the person of Second Lieutenant George H. Pendleton, who, in the middle of the month, had been transferred to G. H. Q. Later, when assigned to duty with the Belgian forces, he conducted himself with such gallantry in a skirmish with a German patrol that he was made an honorary member of the regiment with which he was serving and was decorated by King Albert.

It had been expected that the hike southward would begin on the 25th, but in the meantime orders had come down to hold the regiment in its present station. On the 21st of March the British line in Picardy gave way before the gigantic thrust of the Germans, and the worst defeat in British military history was incurred at the very climax of the war. The world of the Allies trembled at the sudden vision of impending disaster. With the British 5th Army staggering under the avalanche of the enemy, and the strength of America not yet fully marshalled to strike a decisive blow, the hideous head of defeat raised itself and leered at our anxiety. But even so great a setback as this did not demoralize the French, who made a specialty of rising to crises; they immediately rushed every available regiment northward to stem the grey advance, and finally closed the gap between them and the English.

It was this turn of affairs that so abruptly interrupted the plans arranged for the 168th and flung it back into action for a period lasting, with but the scantiest and

most necessary respites, up to the very day of the Armistice. The Rainbow Division was to return to the Baccarat sector to release the experienced 128th Division for the bitter struggle that was determining the fate of the Allies. The 42nd was to have a sector all its own — the first experience of the kind for any American division.

This new sector, covering about thirteen kilometers of front, was composed of the sub-sectors of Neufmaisons and Merviller. The former, which abutted on the right the boundary line between the French 7th and 8th Armies, was assigned to the 84th Brigade, and the latter to the 83rd. The sub-sector Neufmaisons included the C. R.'s Chasseurs, Village Nègre, Chamois, Neuviller, and Grand Bois. For the present a battalion of French was to hold the C. R. Chasseurs, and the 168th was to take over from the French 169th Infantry, in addition to its former group of the Chamois, the C. R. Village Nègre. The other two centers then held by the French 168th were to be occupied by Alabama. Of the four regiments of the Division, the 168th was the only one familiar with this section of the front, for during the preliminary period the rest had served with units farther to the north, although the 167th was not a great distance from its former sector of Ancerviller.

There were perhaps a half dozen heartbreaking hikes during the service of the 168th that left quite as vivid and unpleasant impressions as some of the appalling experiences of the battle line. One of these poignant tests of endurance was the march from the Rambervillers area back to the Baccarat sector — made harder by the realization that it was a return to the misery and strain which had almost been forgotten in the peace and quiet of the sunny rest area. When marching to the rear, the

AIRPLANE VIEW OF BADONVILLER AND SECTION OF THE FRONT LINE. THIS IS A GERMAN PICTURE WHICH WAS GIVEN TO SERGEANT BENGE OF HEADQUARTERS COMPANY BY A GERMAN SOLDIER IN NIEDERBREISIG

FIRST AID STATION AT VILLAGE NEGRE APRIL 29, 1918

RESERVE POSITION AT VILLAGE NEGRE APRIL 29, 1918

mental attitude goes a long way towards reducing fatigue and distance; the effect of moving towards the front is just the reverse.

At two o'clock in the morning of the 28th of March the first sleepy-eyed columns of the regiment formed up in the shadowed street of Housseras and set out for the region that was to be their home for the next three months. Silently they marched, kilometer after kilometer, although a series of irritating events arose to delay the column and break the regularity of its cadence. The stars bowed to the breaking dawn, yet on they plodded; the sun rose high in the heavens, but still there was no halt. "It can't be much farther", each one told himself. "Only a kilometer or so more", the officers hopefully encouraged their drooping men. But when that kilometer was covered, and another, and another, until it seemed that the next step would be the last, and that the numbed arms and breaking backs would refuse to answer the demands made on them, the goal was always ahead.

But everything has its end, and noon saw the companies of the First Battalion settled in the ever-crowded and welcoming village of Neufmaisons. Thirty-four kilometers is a severe test for well-conditioned feet, and many of the men who stuck to the finish had feet still tender and swollen from their first experience in the trenches.

The Second Battalion, to which Company C of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion had been permanently attached, had only twenty-five kilometers to make to its billets in Veney; while the Third, which had the easiest march of all, halted in Deneuvre. The Machine Gun and Headquarters Companies ferretted out space with the

First Battalion and Regimental Headquarters in Neufmaisons, and the Supply Company once more opened up for business in the mud of Indian Village.

The riddled walls of Badonviller were again echoing to the click of Yankee hobnails on cobblestones: it was the 29th of March, and the men of the First Battalion were filing down the road to Village Nègre preparatory to taking over the sector from the French.

It was a comparatively pleasant spot, this new sector, with its wooded hills and its rustic cottages. On the right where the line made a sharp dip to the south, one could gaze off into the foothills of the Vosges, now reverberating to the cannon's roar. It was an easier position to occupy than the C. R. Chamois, for on account of its hilly slopes the drainage was better and the dugouts more habitable. The trees, or what was left of them, offered some protection from the observation of the enemy and prevented his artillery from registering with precision. The reserve position, on the south slope of the hill, was almost cosy in its security and freedom. The dugouts had an occasional window, and ground floor entrances, and the headquarters building had all the comforts of a sturdy log cabin, with the added convenience of a good road running past the door. The First Aid Station was an accomplishment of artistic merit, dug into the side of the hill, with dry, and well-ventilated, bomb-proof chambers. The French had, in the course of their three years' occupation, contrived to give the place a home-like look, and the formal garden effect of the "front yard" made it a favorite place to linger when the evenings were warm and clear. As soon as the Americans occupied the positions a nearby dugout was taken over by the Y. M.

C. A. which continued to furnish the best of service throughout the following three months.

As in the Chamois, here each G. C. had a distinctive name, that of a French Colony in Africa, taking its cue from the designation of the sector, Village Nègre. The front line extended along high ground from G. C. 5, Congo, on the right, through G. C. 6, Dahomey, where it overlooked a ravine, then diagonally down the slope and part way up the opposite pitch to G. C. 7, Sénégal, and thence along slightly rising ground through G. C. 8, Soudan, which abutted on Cerf, the left post of the Chamois sector.

The German trench of Mecklembourg was only about a hundred yards away from our lines; but as the enemy occupied it at infrequent intervals after the raid of March 9th, there was little activity between the opposing trenches.

The discovery by patrols that the German front line was lightly held gave birth to the legend of the Old Man with the Wooden Leg. It was stoutly asserted by a group of amateur investigators that the entire sector opposite Village Nègre was held by an old man and the members of his family who moved about from place to place at night, firing a few rounds from their light machine guns and sending up an occasional flare at varying points in order to create the illusion of numbers. It was likewise affirmed that by giving close attention one could hear him as he stumped up and down the Mecklembourg and Riga trenches inspecting his posts.

However, there was one spot to which the Boche clung tenaciously, the Saillant de Bohême, opposite Congo, where the old German front line swung out in a bend toward our position. From the time that our troops

entered the sector until late in June, the Germans busied themselves continuously constructing new trenches and works in this vicinity. A small stone blockhouse in front of Congo, which was used by day as an observation post, commanded the view of these operations, but as shooting from an observation post was frowned upon, no attempt was made from this point to keep the enemy under cover. He was permitted to dig away until he appeared to have nearly finished his work, and then a flock of French "Flying Pigs" would go wobbling over to blow it up.

Sénégal, from its position in the brush on a reverse slope, soon proved to be the most unpopular post in the new line, for the Boche seemed to have a particular spite against it; and every platoon that took it over went in prepared for a period of uncertainty and unrest.

The day following the entry of the First Battalion into the line the Second marched over from Veney and relieved the French in the Chamois sector. The Third Battalion, arriving the same day from Deneuvre, was parceled out, two companies in the camp of Ker Arvor in the woods east of Pexonne, one in the village of Pexonne, and the other at Trois Sapins. In the meantime Regimental Headquarters was established at Pexonne in the building vacated by Colonel Allié, and the Machine Gun Company and the Stokes Mortar and 37mm Platoons of the Headquarters Company were on duty at the front.

Captain Ross was holding Nègre with two companies in the line, and Major Stanley had a similar strength in Chamois; but when the first company reliefs were effected on April 7th, B Company took over the entire C. R. Village Nègre from A and C Companies, and E Company, relieving both F and G, took full charge of the Chamois. This was in accordance with the new theories of defense

— that the front lines had been too strongly held — so the average line strength was reduced by half.

By Easter Sunday, the 31st of March, the regiment was fully settled in the new sector and everything was functioning smoothly. It was cloudy and cool, and the day passed by ominously quiet. Just before sunset there was a light shower, during which the sun came out long enough to reflect a gorgeous rainbow against the eastern sky. Then, as ever after, the entire command accepted the appearance of this heavenly phenomenon as an omen of good fortune.

It was now necessary to organize the sector which we were holding in our own right in such a way as to insure the efficient coöperation of all the arms under the administration of the regiment. The Signal Platoon of the Headquarters Company, ably directed by Lieutenant John Hutchins, took over the entire system of communication from the French, adding to it gradually, so that by the end of April it had established a complete telephonic liaison not only between the numerous stations of the regiment but between the infantry and artillery as well.

This system included three T. P. S. (*télégraphe par sol*) or ground-sending stations and three visual signal stations which were equipped with French 14 and 24 cm. lamps. One of these, situated just to the rear of the lines between Village Nègre and Chamois, flashed to a receiving station on the hill near Trois Sapins, and was thence relayed to Pexonne.

The radio room was in charge of Sergeant Gerber and Corporal Cronk. At all times there were two men on duty; one to pick up wireless messages, and the other to note whatever the ground receivers might catch. Every morning at 11 o'clock the radio picked up Paris time

which was flashed from the Eiffel Tower; and the one French communiqué, eagerly awaited, brought the earliest news of the outside world. This was often supplemented by the English and German dispatches.

Pigeons were also introduced as a means of communication, and one or two men in each company were given instruction in handling them — incidentally putting up with considerable joshing from their comrades. Each company as it took over the line had a basket of the carriers at the P. A. ready for an emergency, but no occasion demanding their use ever arose.

In communicating by wire from one station to another, great precautions were taken to avoid leakage of information to the enemy; references to position, relief, or movement of troops were forbidden, and organizations and stations were referred to by code. But once in a while there was a slip.

One afternoon, having completed an inspection at the front, and anxious to return to Headquarters, Major Conkling, commander of the 168th's Sanitary Detachment, told Private George Peterson to call for a side car to take him to Pexonne. Peterson in his hurry forgot to code the message, and the interesting information that a full grown American major was contemplating a trip down the Badonviller–Pexonne road was picked up by the Germans. As a result, their observers were expectantly awaiting the first sign of movement in that direction. The Major, however, having overheard the conversation, decided that it might be wiser to go afoot, thinking that the Boche artillery, even if it did spot him, would hardly bother to shell a lone person out for a stroll. After a short wait he set out.

It was a clear day, calm and peaceful. Across the blue

sky fleecy clouds chased one another, and in the rippling fields bright flowers beckoned alluringly. But a German observation balloon searching for prey, a black dot against the transparent background, swayed lazily in the breeze over Cirey. Of this the Major was unaware — that is, until he had just about reached the second turn in the road. A screeching 77 came whistling over to shift his thoughts from the charm of nature, and exploded with a deafening crash in a field nearby; then a second, and finally a third, disconcertingly proximate. The Major, a man of not inconsiderable proportions and avoirdupois, perceptibly quickens his pace, but shells follow him relentlessly. "My God", he says to himself, "it's me they're after", and breaks into a run. The Boche gunner is persistent, and the spurting of dust at his heels warns him that his pace is yet too slow. At this juncture the harassed officer joyfully spies a sheet of elephant iron over the ditch by the roadside, and with a graceful dive, slides under its protecting arch. Upon the disappearance of the target, the shelling ceases as abruptly as it started.

Five minutes later, having regained his breath and poise, and hoping that the Boche has forgotten him, the Major sets out anew. No sooner, however, does his generous six feet of stature grace the landscape than "Blam!"— an explosion to the rear dissipates his hope. This time there is no shelter — no elephant iron, no ditch. The quick step is automatically accelerated into double time, and finally into disorganized rout. The pace is killing; the momentum tremendous. Dotting the road behind him all the way to the edge of town, the artillery spurs him on. When at last he arrives at Regimental Headquarters, gasping, streaming with perspiration,

broken, a ribald and unsympathetic group of fellow officers line up to greet the head of the Sanitary Detachment and to hear from his own lips the story of how an entire German battery assisted him to establish a new two-kilometer record for majors of the Medical Corps.

The Signal Platoon was only one of the several non-combat sections of the Headquarters Company that rendered invaluable service to the regiment; the Pioneers had their hands full from the beginning, and toiled, without a let-up, until the very day that the outfit left the Lorraine front. Upon their arrival at Pexonne, which remained the headquarters of their company, this platoon was divided into permanent details. First, there was the gas detail of eight men whose duties were to construct and to keep in repair the gas-proof doors and curtains at every dugout. Timbers for this purpose had to be carried on the shoulder from the woods to the trenches, sometimes as far as four kilometers, and the bearers were subjected to the difficulties of maneuvering through the narrow, winding, slippery boyaux, and to the dangers of shelling. The blankets which fitted over the timber frames were weighted to fit closely, and to prevent the infiltration of gas, were kept saturated with water.

Another detail of from sixteen to twenty men had charge of the drainage and revetment of the trenches and the repair of the duckboards. When the 168th returned to the line, as when it first entered it, the trenches were deep in water, and in order to repair them to any advantage it was first necessary to drain them completely. With the antiquated pumps provided and the ground conditions, it was an almost hopeless task. It took more than two weeks to drain G. C. 11 alone, after the engineers had declared that it couldn't be done at all.

Most of the duckboards, either from long use or from continued immersion, were decayed and broken and had to be replaced. A detail from the Pioneers also carried the heavier timber by hand to the trenches from the woods near Pexonne, where they not only felled the trees but shaped the boards. Like all the other working parties, they, too, were frequently shelled, and often after being driven from a trench would return to find that work that had taken days to complete had been destroyed in a few minutes.

The wiring detail was charged with the construction and upkeep of the entanglements in front of our positions. These details were in constant demand and were therefore billeted in Badonviller. By reason of their smallness in number and the long stretch of front held by the regiment, they were unable to shoulder alone the burden of the constant repair of trenches and wire, and were largely supplemented by details from Company F, 117th Engineers, which was assigned to the 168th, and by the daily shifts from the line troops.

There were other details, such as the bomb-proof construction group, and the *camoufleurs,* who remained in Pexonne. This latter detail hauled and constructed the camouflage for the three-kilometer stretch of road between Pexonne and Badonviller. They made heavy screens of pine branches which they attached to wires stretched fourteen feet from the ground from poles along the road side. Having veiled as far as possible the portions of the road exposed to enemy observation, they next stretched wires above and across the road and suspended screens from them at intervals of 200 yards.

The sanitary conditions of the trenches when the 168th took them over in its own right were deplorable, and

while the other branches were attempting to make them more habitable, the Medical Detachment was supervising the task of rendering them less dangerous from the standpoint of disease and infection. This was accomplished in part by the strict enforcement of rules as to the disposal of refuse, by liberal and continued employment of chloride of lime, and by the daily construction of new latrines in each post.

The Stokes Mortar Platoon was supplemented by a platoon of French which manned a battery on the top of the Village Nègre Hill. They were a genial, nonchalant group who took life easily and who always made their numerous American guests feel entirely welcome. Their activities, however, appeared to be governed more by caprice than by prearranged schedule; they would sit around lazily smoking, and sipping their *vin rouge* until a sudden impulse moved them all to action. In the midst of a quiet conversation, one would suddenly exclaim, "Boches pas bons", upon which they would all spring to their feet, rush over to their *crapouillots,* and let fly a shower of bombs upon the Saillant de Bohême, or some other convenient spot in the enemy line, and then return to their rustic tables and resume their chat as if nothing had happened.

Sometimes these "pigs" fell uncomfortably close to our lines. On one occasion two D Company men were out in No Man's Land in front of Dahomey on an unauthorized tour of reconnaissance. It happened at the moment that the French had an attack of temperament, and without warning, a flock of the ungainly missiles came wobbling through the air, and the two explorers came to in a shell hole.

"Let's retreat", said one.

"Retreat? I don't know how", replied the other, a recent acquisition.

"Follow me", directed the man of experience; whereupon the replacement received immediate and practical instruction in a highly important military movement.

There was formed about this time a detachment not provided for in the Tables of Organization — the "Upkeep Platoon". Flagrant breaches of discipline in the regiment had been few, but cases of minor infractions were brought before the Summary Court from time to time. Someone suddenly had a brilliant idea — why not let the men under judgment of this court work out their sentence in the front line, instead of paying a fine or spending a few quiet, restful days in the Guard House? Accordingly, the few who had imbibed too freely, or who had set out on a tour of certain parts of France without proper authority, or who had proved otherwise unruly, found themselves at the front, repairing trenches, digging latrines, draining dugouts — tasks less pleasant than their imagination could conjure — while their comrades might be enjoying the delights of the rear.

At first the prisoners worked at the front only during the day, returning each evening to the "Brig" in the cellar of the Hotel de la Gare, once Badonviller's best and only hostelry; but later they were permitted, even required, to spend all twenty-four hours where they could keep close watch on the enemy. The salutary and restraining effects of this new system were marked, for the number of transgressions very materially decreased after its institution. Men who might not hesitate to incur a heavy fine, or a few weeks' incarceration, balked at the thought of a prolonged stay in the line; the regular tour, short in comparison, was bad enough; but this was

far worse. Many a man who thought himself "hard-boiled" beforehand, emerged from his enforced servitude under enemy fire thoroughly tamed and chastened.

There were but three things to be looked forward to in the trenches: chow, relief, and the occasions when Chaplain Robb, loaded up like a Santa Claus with tobacco, cigarettes, and candy (if he could unearth any), came to distribute good cheer.

The Chaplain was a busy man; for in addition to being entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the men, and burying the dead, and keeping a record of the burials, he acted as banker, general purchasing agent, and athletic director of the regiment. Moreover, he was an editor. The news of the outside world was brought in by the French editions of two or three American and English dailies, but the small happenings within the regiment were recorded in the peripatetic issue of *The Wild Rose,* sponsored, edited, printed, and distributed by the Chaplain's office.

This entirely unique paper first saw the light at Camp Mills, and continued to appear whenever circumstances permitted. The first few issues were neatly printed, but when the regiment got to France where presses were not always available, it was more often published in the form of mimeographed sheets. It had its staff cartoonists, company correspondents, and an agony column, where those burdened with the impulse could rid themselves of poetry of varying quality. While it lasted, *The Wild Rose* was a distinct influence in the life of the regiment.

XV

THE SCOUTS

Early in the month of April the three groups of Battalion Scouts were organized as distinctive bodies, and the regular patrolling of No Man's Land was taken over by them. Heretofore this had been done by officers and men in turn, just as any other detail, although certain ones especially adapted to this kind of work had got more than their full share of it. Now three or four officers from each battalion and seven men from each company were detached from their organizations and relieved from all other duties.

The officers chosen were men who had shown themselves particularly fitted for the exacting and hazardous task of keeping the regiment informed as to the activities of the enemy. The First Battalion Scouts were led by Lieutenant Donald S. Mackay who continued in command until wounded at Sergy in July, having proved a remarkably efficient leader through a variety of critical experiences. With him worked Lieutenants Robert Bly, Roger W. Spaulding, and James E. Breslin. The Second Battalion group was in charge of Lieutenants Walter B. Schaefer, Kirt M. Chapman, and Herbert F. Wallace; and the detachment from the Third was trained and officered by Lieutenants Glade T. Bradley, Theodore E. Jones, and John M. Currie.

The types of men who volunteered for scout duty varied so noticeably as to make any general classification impossible. Most of them were men of a naturally

venturesome spirit who turned instinctively toward the most difficult and most perilous tasks. Others made their choice because it offered more excitement and less drudgery than the routine of the trenches, and because they preferred to take both the hardship and the risk in concentrated doses. A few of the men thus detailed lacked balance and restraint, and after experience had proved them unsuited to the work they were eliminated and replaced by more dependable applicants.

In a way the scouts were the eyes of the regiment. They could find out things that observers from the trenches and in the air could not uncover, and for that reason their services were of the utmost importance. They were trained to look for the most minute indications of hostile activity, as these bits of information might lead to the discovery of more important facts. A piece of string, a rag on a stick, or a new opening in the wire might indicate a coming raid. It was impressed upon them that anything that bore evidence of human handling was worth attention and investigation.

By watching the enemy and learning his habits, by determining where and how his defenses were organized, which were his strong and which his weak points, we were enabled to adjust our plans for aggression with a prospect of minimum loss and most probable degree of success. Every scrap of information reported by the patrols was recorded at Regimental and Divisional Headquarters, and finally in the course of time was incorporated in the battle maps. Thus, by weaving together the sometimes apparently inconsequential threads of information furnished by these patrols, there was built up the complete story of the enemy's defenses along his entire front.

During April and May the American patrols grew more confident and daring. Practically every night saw a band of from a dozen to forty men starting out from Chamois or Village Nègre to search out enemy posts or to lie in ambush for prisoners. The Boche, on the other hand, grew more cautious, and not wishing to chance disastrous encounters, gradually relinquished to us the almost unchallenged control of No Man's Land.

The temper of the regiment was manifested not only by the organized parties which made their nightly pilgrimages into German territory, but by the willingness of the men to go out at any time during the day or the night after any of the enemy who had the temerity to show themselves. If a Boche sniper became too active, someone in the line would soon be around seeking permission of the officer in charge to organize a little party to get him. Or when things were getting too slack, another would think up some plan and lay it before the lieutenant. Generally these ideas were too wild to be feasible, but they showed the proper spirit.

Just at dusk on the afternoon of April 4th an impromptu patrol set out from Dahomey to investigate a suspicious looking spot that had been noted near the German line. They found it deserted, but brought back with them as a trophy of the expedition a box of high explosive and a large coil of insulated wire that the Boches had left temporarily unguarded, but which they no doubt intended for use against us. Innumerable affairs of this nature demonstrated the completion of the process of transforming raw troops into seasoned soldiers.

On another occasion toward the latter part of the month a patrol of eight men under Lieutenant Bly,

leaving from the same post, went over to see what was happening in the Riga trench. It was, as had been suspected, occupied, but the few Germans on guard fled upon the entry of our men. Farther on the Americans came upon a group of dugouts, saw wisps of smoke curling therefrom, and caused no end of havoc in one of them by dropping grenades down the stove pipe. One scout with an active mind declared that he saw a pot of beans fly out the door as the grenades exploded. After bombing the remaining dugouts and reconnoitering the trenches for several hundred yards in either direction, the patrol returned to our lines without feeling that they had met with enough excitement to talk about.

A patrol of the Third Battalion ran into a band of the enemy one evening and missed bagging a goodly bunch of prisoners only because of the excellent speed and homing instinct of the Germans. Lieutenant Bradley was in charge of the party which left our lines at half past nine on the night of April 20th. In arrowhead formation it advanced toward the ruins of the Haut d'Arbre Farm in front of G. C. 12 and passed on up the slope to the German line.

A sudden burst of flares held them transfixed until the danger of discovery was past; then the Lieutenant sent Sergeant Leo McHugh of K Company with a small detail over to the right to open fire on that part of the German trench from which the flares had gone up, hoping in that way to draw fire and to enable them to locate the enemy's position and determine his strength.

Before this plan could be developed, a group of fourteen Germans was discovered unknowingly closing in on the left of the American patrol. The leader, having made his dispositions for a frontal attack, was not in position to

à mes vaillants compagnons d'armes du 148e Américain
Souvenir d'admiration, de reconnaissance et d'affection
Colonel S. Allié

A SECTION OF CAMP 3/5

BATTERY C 150TH FIELD ARTILLERY
FIRING IN SUPPORT OF RAINBOW TROOPS

successfully attempt an ambush on his flank, and it was necessary to act from the standpoint of discretion rather than that of strategy. With one accord the Americans let loose upon the Germans such a blast of rifle, pistol, and Chauchat fire as to raise them off the ground. The surprised and terrified Boche patrol made no attempt to give battle, but retreated in panic to its own lines, tearing down its own wire in its haste. Our party returned unharmed, but was able to report two of the enemy wounded during the brief engagement.

Sometimes it happened that the most carefully laid plans went awry; an unforeseen mishap at the last moment might upset the entire schedule. There were indications that the Germans, after abandoning the Mecklembourg trench for several weeks, were again occupying it at night; and a raid was organized to drive them out and to capture prisoners if possible.

At 8:50 on the night of the 19th of April a party composed of three officers, seven non-coms, and forty-nine men, six of whom were engineers, stole out from PSI, G. C. Sénégal, and proceeded to a line of old shell holes in front of the German wire. There had been considerable difficulty in carrying through our own boyaux the two petards for blowing openings in the Boche wire; each broke in two before the jumping off point was reached. Finally half of one was carried out from PSI and was rushed, breaking again, to the wire, and pushed through about seven yards. However, the engineers were unable to adjust the cap and wire, so the plan had to be abandoned.

At 9 o'clock a barrage of artillery, machine guns, and Stokes mortars was laid on Mecklembourg and Riga trenches and kept there for fifteen minutes. Lieutenant

Spaulding with his section (a sergeant and nine men) then found their way through the wire about fifty yards to the right of the spot where they had attempted to explode the petard and reconnoitered for some distance on either side of the Jena communicating trench which joined the Mecklembourg trench at their point of entry. They found no traces of the enemy, and after blowing up with grenades a wire gate that obstructed the trenches the party came out.

In the meantime Lieutenant Breslin with five men worked along the wire in the other direction, but could find no breach. Lieutenant Mackay, the commander of the raid, attempted to repair the petard, and when he found it was useless he joined Spaulding's party which was just returning. It was then 9:20, and as the signal to withdraw, a Véry Light from Sénégal, was given, the entire force returned without having accomplished its mission. On the return a few grenades were thrown at them by some Germans in the front line who had managed to escape detection.

Disappointed at this failure, but undaunted, Lieutenant Mackay again set out from PSI at 11:45 P. M., this time with fifteen men. A sergeant and nine men were left in support in two shell holes close to the German line, while the leader with five men proceeded north toward Mecklembourg. They had almost reached the point where Lieutenant Spaulding's party had made its entry when several grenades burst almost in their midst. They hastily withdrew from range, and after an interval made another attempt, but were again driven off by bombs. This advance post at the junction of Jena and Mecklembourg was well protected by wire. The garrison, which had fled at the approach of the larger party earlier in the

evening, was evidently now determined to make a stand, and our men could not get close enough to them to rush them. Not to be swerved from their purpose, the Americans made a slight détour and discovered a breach near the juncture of the next communicating trench to the left.

This was ticklish business, penetrating into the enemy line when he was aware of the presence of the patrol and when he might be planning some ruse to fall upon it; but while they may have been somewhat nervous, they were stout-hearted men and it never occurred to them to hesitate. They crossed the trench and, following a well beaten path which their keenly developed eyesight had detected, crept on through the hushed wood to an uncharted trench marked *Hunnen Graben* (Hun Trench). After annexing the sign for a souvenir, they continued east along the path. For a while they lay in wait, hoping to surprise a passing German or so, but nothing happened; then they traced the path to the point where it crossed the Jena trench, a hundred yards directly behind the post from which they had been bombed. Here they discovered signs of recent work on a dugout and a supply of shovels and grenades, but it was not safe to announce themselves by blowing it up, so the information was later given to the artillery. Returning, they crossed Mecklembourg and followed a chicane across a fallen tree through the wire. The branches of the tree concealed this breach, but a track of mud along the trunk betrayed the fact that the enemy had been using it as a main post of exit and entry and suggested an excellent spot for an ambush. Leaving the rest of the patrol in a shell hole, Lieutenant Mackay took one man with him and crawled stealthily to the post from which they had been bombed.

A muffled cough indicated that it was still occupied, so they heaved over a couple of grenades in payment for what they had received; then as it was growing light they all withdrew to our lines. The night's work was done, and they could return to their billets in Badonviller to sleep and to prepare for the next night's adventure.

This was the sort of patrol that received slight, if any, mention in the daily report, because there had been no spectacular encounter with the enemy, nor even any casualties; but every second had been a moment of strain and of tightened nerves, of possible death or capture, for every member that composed it. Although they had failed in the original object through no fault of their own, they had brought back valuable information as to the enemy's defense and works.

On the 21st of April the organization and defense of the regimental sector was simplified by readjusting the front so that a single battalion covered it all. On the 17th the Third Battalion, supported by Company D, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, relieved the Second in Chamois, K Company replacing H; and four days later I Company took over Village Nègre from Company A of the First Battalion. Under this arrangement the battalion in the line was to serve for eight days, thus giving each one sixteen days in support or reserve between its tours in the front.

It was to familiarize the scouts of the Third Battalion with the new terrain in front of Village Nègre, which their unit was holding for the first time, as well as to investigate the post at the junction of Jena and Mecklembourg trenches, to make a further reconnaissance of the Jena boyau, and to gain contact with the enemy, that a

patrol was organized to leave Sénégal on the night of the 21st.

The party consisted of fifteen men from the Third Battalion Scouts commanded by Lieutenant Bradley, and Lieutenant Schaefer and Lieutenant Mackay, the whole under the command of the latter, who was as well acquainted with this part of No Man's Land as with his own lines.

It was a bad night, black as pitch, with a cold rain driving down from the east. At nine o'clock the patrol emerged from PSI, and advancing through the tangle of wire and abandoned trenches that covered the ravaged hillside disappeared into the jet gulf of No Man's Land. Three men — Corporal Richard Lombard and Privates Ambrose B. Gladson and Richard Fernley — were sent out to cover the right, Sergeant Ralph F. Stephens and an auto-rifle team dropped off to protect the left, and the main party went on. Near the German wire all but the three officers and five men — Sergeant McHugh and Privates Trudeau, Barnes, Bladon, and Bruce — halted in a shell hole. This group, moving noiselessly and with caution, passed through the wire, crossed the Mecklembourg trench, and continued to penetrate into the enemy line.

At this point someone coughed, and immediately a German flare went up. Not a sound or a movement until the light had died away, and then, as the object of the patrol was yet to be accomplished, Lieutenant Mackay fearlessly led on in the face of the suspicion already aroused and the difficulty of advancing without attracting further attention. With their hearts in their mouths, and the mere tick of their watches sounding to their ears like hammers on an anvil, they resumed their

wary course, Lieutenant Mackay leading, followed by Lieutenant Schaefer, Lieutenant Bradley, and the five men.

The Germans, however, had located the patrol with exactness, and were waiting for the most favorable moment to assail it. It was about 11:20 P. M. when the Boche line opened up at short range with a staggering fire of machine guns and rifles, at the same time dazzling the sky with flares.

At the first bewildering blast Lieutenant Schaefer fell to the ground, wounded in the abdomen, and after crying, "My God, Brad, they've got me", lay motionless. With the deadly fire pouring in from the front and the flares mercilessly exposing them, it was a case of *sauve qui peut*; and Bradley and the five men, who thought Schaefer dead, scattered into the nearest shell holes. Then when machine gun fire developed on their left flank, they were forced to withdraw altogether to avoid being cut off by the enemy. Dropping back from crater to crater, Bradley, Trudeau, Barnes, and Bladon met in an old trench where they waited for about fifteen minutes before making for our lines.

Lieutenant Mackay, who was some distance in advance of the rest when the firing commenced, took to cover, naturally, but after a few minutes returned to the spot to find Schaefer alive and suffering intensely. For nearly an hour he stayed there, pistol in hand and bombs within reach, holding the wounded man's head on his lap and trying to devise some way to get him back to our lines. The agonies that Schaefer suffered in body, Mackay must have suffered in mind, and his courage and devotion in remaining there through that terrible hour mark him for the high type of soldier that he was. Despite his

struggles to keep from groaning, stuffing his handkerchief in his mouth, biting his hand until it streamed with blood, Schaefer finally gave way to his anguish and broke into hoarse, uncontrollable sobs. Any moment his comrade expected the burst of fire that would finish them both, but he did not feel that he could leave him in that condition, although Schaefer was begging him to seek safety for himself.

In the end, however, realizing that Schaefer was too seriously wounded to be moved without assistance, Mackay made him as comfortable as he could and started back for help. On his way to our lines he met the covering party on the right, who had heard the firing but who did not know what had happened, and took them back with him to bring the lieutenant in. But in the meantime the Germans had come out and taken the wounded officer prisoner, and all they found, as they searched under a heavy machine gun fire, was his helmet and belt which they brought back with them. On the return they came upon Lieutenant Bradley and other members of the patrol, who, learning of the situation, had started forward with a litter.

The party finally reported in to Major Brewer at 1:20 A. M. That day the entire regiment mourned the loss of one of the most daring and successful patrol leaders it ever produced. Lieutenant Schaefer was a well-known football star at the University of Chicago, and was reputed to have been the first American officer to go over the top, having served with the First Division in November, 1917, a few weeks before joining the 168th at Rimaucourt. It was feared that he would not survive his injuries, and several months later it was learned through roundabout channels that he died the next day in Cirey-

sur-Vezouse and was buried by the Germans in a cemetery near the town.

In checking up the patrol it was discovered that still another member was missing; no trace could be found of Private Elmer B. Bruce. Like the others he was unfamiliar with the terrain and was confused in the darkness; for fear of taking the wrong direction, he spent the remainder of the night in a shell hole. Shortly after daylight a German working party (he was still within their lines) appeared about a hundred yards away and caused him no little anxiety for several hours. All that day he remained in hiding, and having been able to orient himself, made for our lines under cover of darkness.

It was nearly midnight when he reached one of the outposts at Cerf and tried to explain who he was. The sentry was not to be fooled by any German trick and refused to let him come close. Then Bruce made the strategic error of calling out "Kamerad", and the men all along the post began to sling grenades in his direction. He finally became disgusted with the whole proceeding, and rushed the line. Luckily he got near enough to be recognized before the outpost had time to act, and he got safely in.

"It was a sho' nuff hot time", he remarked in his Arkansas drawl to his welcoming comrades who had given him up for lost, "but they ain't no bullet that's got this baby's numbah." And he was right, for after surviving the tour of the Lorraine front, the battle in the Champagne, and the Hell of the Ourcq, he was accidentally drowned in early August while swimming in the Marne.

On the same night that Lieutenant Schaefer was wounded and captured, another patrol under Lieutenant

Currie set out from Cerf on a different mission. It was thought that the enemy was holding in strength the Trench des Affolés, a line seven hundred yards to the rear of the original German front, and this patrol was directed to learn for a certainty the true state of its defense. In accomplishing his mission, Lieutenant Currie established a record by penetrating into the Boche territory farther than any other patrol from this regiment.

In single file the officer and fifteen men left our line at the right of Chamois and proceeded across No Man's Land, through the German wire, past the Trench des Cinq Entonnoirs, the enemy first line, and the Trench de Thuringe, his second line, to a creek on the farther side where a covering party of seven men with two Chauchats was left.

From the creek, extending about a hundred yards toward des Affolés, was a thick grove of pines. One man from the covering party was detailed to string white tape through these woods as the main party advanced so that they could find their way back easily; and when he had marked the route, he rejoined his post at the creek.

Upon reaching the northern edge of the woods, the patrol, in diamond formation for the protection of its flanks, went fifty yards to the left, following an old French listening-in wire to an abandoned German trench which they carefully reconnoitered. From there on the country was open, with little or no cover. They were now well within the enemy lines, maneuvering over unfamiliar ground, with woods, two systems of trenches, and much wire to obstruct their way back to safety. With every chance of being cut off, should they arouse the enemy, they took every precaution to avoid discovery. To cross the open space, Currie again drew up his men in spear-

head formation, and crawling on their hands and knees, they stealthily approached their goal. When they attained a sunken road banded by wire, small parties were sent to reconnoiter for a hundred and fifty yards in either direction. Finding everything quiet, a second covering party of three men was left at this point.

The farther the men got from their exit, the greater became the danger and the tension. Involuntarily they jumped at every sound, real or imaginary; a low flying bat startled them and sent cold chills chasing up and down their backs; and a hooting owl added another shiver. Every one now felt his way with his hands before making a move. With tense muscles the party silently penetrated the next belt of wire and halted within twenty-five yards of the trench.

Here the lieutenant divided the patrol into two parties of three men each, with an interval of twenty-five yards between them; and, crawling on their stomachs with pistols, grenades, and knives ready for instant use, they gradually wormed their way to the parapet, arriving there simultaneously. Before them was an unoccupied ditch, twelve feet in width and depth, and half full of water — the Germans had evidently planned it for artillery or mortar emplacements.

A careful reconnaissance to the sides and front was carried out, and just as they were preparing to return they heard the sudden burst of machine guns and grenades that surprised Lieutenant Mackay's patrol. To Currie's men it meant one thing — that they had been surrounded and that the covering party was being attacked. The great problem was to escape both the attacking force and the outposts that they knew lay between them and No Man's Land. The lieutenant gave

orders that if the party was cut off, to proceed to the left along des Affolés until it reached a position opposite the Alabama sector, and enter our lines from there. The understanding was that if not more than ten of the enemy attacked they would fight their way through.

Returning in the same formation as they had gone out, they picked up the second covering party at the sunken road and reconnoitered another old trench that was discovered en route. About the time they reached the woods, the Boche outposts became alarmed and lit up the ground with flares. Several machine guns were turned in their direction, but they all escaped, rolling up the tape as they retired. The first covering party joined them with a sigh of relief, and the entire patrol reached our lines shortly before three o'clock, having fully accomplished its mission and having secured valuable information as to the enemy's rear area.

A day or so after this, came the bad news of a set-back on the front of the 26th Division. Our brother National Guardsmen from New England, who were holding a sector north of Toul, were overwhelmed at Seicheprey by two battalions of shock troops which penetrated their lines to a considerable depth, taking 150 prisoners and inflicting casualties of more than 600. Now word was passed down to the regiment to be on the lookout, as the report then current was that we were to receive them next. Patrols were at once increased to uncover anything that the enemy had up his sleeve, and every gap in the line was tightened to meet such a blow.

Whether or not as a result of this information, the continued rumors of spies, or the incessant bombardment of the area, the last of the civilians departed from Badonviller, their Lares and Penates piled high on U. S.

Army trucks. The last home was closed, the last shop barred, and the town was now entirely given over to war.

While our patrols and observers were inquiring into the habits and intentions of the enemy, another group was busy keeping him under cover and preventing him from observing our activities. Under the supervision of the regimental and the three battalion intelligence officers, a dozen or so men, particularly well qualified by reason of their excellent marksmanship and initiative, were trained in the fine art of sniping. Armed with high-power rifles equipped with telescopic sights and silencers, and arrayed in weird costumes of camouflaged gunny sacking that covered them from helmet to boot and gave them the appearance of animated scare-crows, these men would take turn at slipping out into No Man's Land before dawn, pick out a convenient shell hole with a good view of the Boche line, and settle down for the day waiting to take a pop at the first squarehead that showed itself.

Burned by the beating rays of the sun, or chilled by driving rain, the men found this irksome as well as dangerous work. The camouflage offered a fair protection, but the least sign of movement was sure to attract the attention of the German watchers, who were no less keen than our own, and it was often necessary to remain in the same cramped position for hours at a time. That, however, was preferable to discovery, for it was no joke to act as a target for the enemy in the open, with a hundred yards of difficult ground and tangled wire between oneself and safety. But our snipers did their work well and faithfully, and there is no doubt that they fully avenged the casualties that we had received at the hands of the Boche sharpshooters.

XVI

INTERLUDES

During the month of April four hundred and thirty-six replacements were added to the regiment, four hundred of them coming in one group. These were the first drafted men to join us, and this was the beginning of the process that was to gradually alter the complexion of the regiment. Among the replacements were many Italians drawn from cities on the eastern seaboard. At first there was some prejudice against the newcomers; but they quickly absorbed the spirit of the regiment, and the power of the new ties created by a common purpose and a common danger soon completed the amalgamation.

These men had come almost directly from the training camps in the States, and looked forward to some sort of preliminary training before being sent to the trenches. As First Sergeant Hart of H Company was marching his contingent to their billets in Badonviller, one of the new men timidly inquired how far they were from the front. "About two hundred yards", replied the Sergeant. "My God, what do you know about that!", exclaimed the dazed individual, who could find no other words to express the shock of the sudden realization of his proximity to the war.

By this time all of the old members of the regiment had experienced at least one tour of the trenches, and the initiated, who could now greet the whistle of a shell with shouts of "Be a dud" or "Gimme his hard-tack", and who cheerfully referred to the ambulance as the "meat

wagon", hailed with glee any error or signs of nervousness among the replacements. There is no doubt that the new men had rather hard sledding at the beginning.

One evening, just after the mess detail had reported in the front line, the officer in command of the G. C., seeing a crowd collected at one end of the trench, hurried over to disperse the gathering before a German observer called down his artillery upon them. He found a shaky sentry holding up the mess detail, a working party, and a liaison patrol at the point of his bayonet. "Oh, my goodness", he exclaimed as the officer approached, "I'm glad you've come. I've forgotten the password, and I don't know whether these men are trying to kid me or not."

Not all the displays of nervousness and unfamiliarity with regulations, however, were confined to the replacements. Mechanic Ray C. Pittington of D Company, who had been deprived of front line experience because of his duties in the supply department, was more than anxious to try it and begged permission to go out on post. One evening he was sent to share a watch with Private Reuben E. Stump, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, stolid and imperturbable. In the course of the night a German patrol approached closely enough to be heard distinctly. Pittington, growing more and more apprehensive, suggested to Stump that he throw a grenade.

"S-sh, they ain't close enough yet", whispered Stump. But his companion was of another mind. In his increasing agitation, he would have thrown a grenade himself but for the fact that he was not familiar with the working parts. This left him helplessly subject to the whims of his comrade. The hostile patrol was obviously nearing the post.

"Say, Stump, go ahead an' throw a grenade", pleaded

Pittington. But the Sphinx at his side made never a move.

"Please, Stump, throw a grenade" — tremulously. Still no answer, and Pittington could feel the sharp steel of a German blade at his throat. Then a final, agonized appeal for mercy:

"Please, *Mister* Stump, won't you throw just one grenade?"

Once when C Company was billeted in Badonviller a sumptuous limousine bearing two officers of high rank rolled into town. In order to shield themselves from the sun, they had slightly drawn the curtains. Private Wilburt L. Matus, who was on sentry duty at the office of the Town Major, stared disinterestedly at the passing car and made no pretense at saluting. An officer who had observed this infraction of military etiquette stepped up to Matus and asked him if he didn't know that he should have saluted.

"No, Sir", replied the sentinel with conviction, "my orders are to salute all officers, colors, and standards not cased."

A certain colonel from Division Headquarters (for whom the 168th had no great love, so he shall be designated as Colonel X) was a frequent visitor to our lines on tours of inspection. As one of the first duties of inspector is criticism, these visits were not always hailed with enthusiasm, particularly as the Colonel had a most unfortunate manner coupled with an original method of acquiring information. One day he chanced on a new man in M Company, and began to question him.

"What would you do if you saw someone out in No Man's Land?"

"Heave a grenade at him, Sir."

"No you wouldn't, no you wouldn't", exclaimed the Colonel in some heat, "it might be one of your own men."

"All right, just try it and see", was the disconcerting rejoinder.

After the incident of April 18th, Colonel X's visits to the front of the 168th ceased abruptly. Before dawn that morning he stopped at Battalion Headquarters for Major Brewer, and in his company started out for a tour of the line. It was about five o'clock, just as the day was breaking, when he reached G. C. Cerf, then occupied by a platoon of K Company under Lieutenant Lewis. This officer was questioned at length by the inspector, who finally asked:

"What do you do if you want a barrage?"

"Touch off that rocket, Sir", replied Lieutenant Lewis.

"Well, we'll see if the artillery is on the job. Wait until I give the word, and then set off your rocket."

Colonel X pulled out his watch, and waiting until the second hand registered to his satisfaction, gave the order. The lieutenant had his doubts about the matter, but knew better than to argue the point. He applied a match, and in a few seconds the six star red was bursting in the air.

The artillery *was* on the job; in less than a minute the barrage came roaring down, and as the artillery commander thought it a likely morning for an attack he threw in a few extra pieces for good luck. The men at the Stokes position hesitated a second, but the officer, counting the six stars, yelled, "There they are — Shoot!" The machine guns, too, joined in and added their sputtering and spitting to the general tumult.

Colonel X was quite satisfied with the alertness of

MISS ELIZABETH POTTS, MISS CHRISTINE JOHNSTON. Y WORKERS WITH THE 168TH

MRS. EDITH W. KNOWLES FIRST WOMAN Y WORKER ASSIGNED TO THE 168TH

LEON WILLARD, THE ALSATIAN, WHO SURRENDERED TO LIEUTENANT FERGUSON

F COMPANY MEN IN A COMMUNICATION TRENCH OF THE C. R. CHAMOIS

MAJOR CHARLES J. CASEY

MAJOR EMORY C. WORTHINGTON

EXPLODED GAS DRUMS USED IN THE ATTACK
AGAINST THE 168TH ON MAY 27TH, 1918

the supporting arms, and apparently disregarding the continuance of the barrage, which was falling with unabated fury, commenced his round of the post. About ten minutes later a sudden misgiving assailed him.

"Those shells aren't part of the barrage I asked for, are they?"

"Yes, Sir", answered Lewis.

"Why, I wanted only a one-shot test."

Inquiries from Regimental Headquarters and back from the artillery positions as to what all the fuss was about began to come in. When it was learned that it was a test called for by an inspecting officer, trouble started. The artillery commander was particularly disgusted at having given away his barrage line and gun positions to satisfy the whim of a man who hadn't taken the trouble to find out the proper signal for his experiment. The result of the investigation was never published "for distribution to all concerned", but never again did a pompous martinet grab away a gun from a front line sentry, and shout at him, "Well, what are you going to do now?" Some enthusiastic statisticians figured out just how many thousand dollars the barrage ate up. But no matter how high the figure, there are some who maintain that the cost was not too great.

Soon after the Divisional *Summary of Intelligence* became an established institution there appeared in its pages the first flickerings of a spark of humor concerning a large black dog that continued to glow here and there as long as the Division remained in action. It was unconscious humor — the Divisional Intelligence Officer himself swears that the large black dog was never faked. Whatever may have been the military importance of his peregrinations through the German front, his continued

reappearance in print brought to us a certain confidence and reassurance. He was an omen of success, and however confusing and uncertain the situation, however threatening the blows of the enemy, once "the large black dog" was reported as having been seen on our front, everything was all right again.

At first his color was not distinguishable; he merely stuck his nose into the maze of detail of the *Summary* of April 25th, as follows:

"Man with dog moved along Brémenil road toward les Carrières de Badonviller at 4 P. M."

Two days later the following discovery proved him to be an active enemy:

"Two men at periscope east of Le Verger S. E. 432.50 — 195.50 sent dog to Ouvrage Rouge at 5:15 P. M."

It may be that up to this time the observers had failed to determine his size, or perhaps the reports had been conflicting; at any rate this point was not definitely ascertained until the *Summary* of May 4-5 came from the press. Then it became known through the item:

"Three men with large dog in Première Haie Trench 9:30 A. M."

The conclusive proof that one fact leads to another was never more openly demonstrated than in the cumulative development of this bit of history. After weeks of patient waiting came the final authorized description in the edition of May 15-16:

"Eleven men and large black dog in vicinity of Carrefour des Noctambules 8:13 to 9:18 A. M."

From this time on he always appeared as "the large black dog". His breed was never disclosed, possibly an act of courtesy on the part of the Intelligence Officer, and his sex was never questioned. At 10:40 A. M. on the 18th

of May he was visible for a moment near les Carrières and then vanished into the ravine. At 11:05 A. M. of June 1st he was sighted and fired upon in an abandoned trench in front of Bouc.

The roving disposition of this animal can be explained only by the supposition that he traveled with an inspecting officer. One day he would reveal himself in front of the Alabama sector, and the next morning he might come trotting past the 168th line. But a dog must have a home as well as a day, and it is probable — in fact, almost necessary — that our large black dog should have his headquarters in the *Bois des Chiens*. The *Summary* of June 2-3 states:

"At 9:30 A. M. a man accompanied by the large black dog showed himself at dugout in Bois des Chiens 434.70 — 193.70."

On the afternoon of the 10th of June, "the large black dog not reported for some days past showed itself for a short time beside a clump of five trees on hill 366.2 at 2:44 P. M."

By this time the observers of the Intelligence Department had become so proficient in their art that to their trained ears the color of a howling dog could be easily determined by the sense of hearing alone. The report of June 16-17 includes:

"The large black dog was heard howling in the Saillant du Feys at 11:30 P. M."

Just as the Division was moving out of the Lorraine sector there appeared what was then considered an obituary. June 19-20: "The large black dog was seen at 6 P. M. near Trench des Affolés at 439.42 — 190.97. He disappeared when the first shell of our bombardment struck this point. He is presumably dead."

It appeared later that someone had presumed too much in this matter, for in July, while Sergy was awaiting its capture, the large black dog again appeared on our front, and the *Summary of Intelligence* reinstated him with full apologies.

He presented himself to view at least once during the St. Mihiel drive, and after the storming of the Côte de Châtillon comes this of October 21-22:

"At 2:38 P. M. the large black dog appeared for a moment on the sky line at FO75.965, but disappeared toward the north before he could be captured."

The next day, the following:

"Note: In paragraph 9 of Summary of Intelligence No. 149, the point at which the large black dog was seen should have read LO75.965."

And finally, recording his last appearance in action, this entry of the 23rd: "At 11:35 A. M. the large black dog was seen moving north on the Landres-et-St. Georges road disappearing hastily over the ridge at F2286."

Thus passed from sight the only Hun the Rainbow Division ever considered with friendly interest. We hope that the "large black dog" reached the Rhine in safety and ends his days peacefully.

XVII

BEHIND THE LINES

The month of May witnessed the complete transition from the barrenness of a late and tenacious winter to the full bloom of luxuriant summer. All at once one realized himself in a country of appealing beauty, for fair Lorraine was at her loveliest. The almost continuous rains of April, followed by a period of balmy weather, forced from every spot capable of supporting life a blanket of heavy vegetation; tangled grasses and bright patches of wild flowers sprang up in No Man's Land in a brave endeavor to cover up the harsh, tumbled surface of that shell-torn area; behind the lines flowers grew in varied profusion, brilliant and fragrant; and the walled gardens of Badonviller blossomed forth among the ruins to recall their former charm and restfulness. An anomaly in that land of desolation, a wide-limbed apple tree in full blossom crowned the dugout at G. C. 12, offering to friend and foe alike the beauty of its misty wreath. Perhaps the Germans spared it because it was so beautiful. But no less incongruous were the sweetly trilling nightingales that haunted the Bois du Feys opposite, and vied courageously with the strident song of the machine gun and the raucous cannon. Nature was doing her best to overcome the handicaps of war.

The alterations in the landscape did not lessen the dangers of the front, and one looked forward longingly to the periods of rest behind the lines. After the toil and strain and wakefulness of a tour in the trenches, the

woodland camp of Ker Arvor seemed like a paradise. It was a place of rest and quiet; in the cool depths of its shade one could for the time being put the war behind him and forget its horrors and its discomforts. Although but a few kilometers from the front, within easy range of the field guns, no German shell ever found its way there, for it was so well concealed from overhead observation by natural camouflage that the Boche never discovered it. There one could wash and shave and live like a human being without bothering about how much water he was using; he could have time to himself to read or sleep or to ramble through the woods, for there was no drill at all and only occasional calls for reserve trench construction details and perhaps for wood. Magnificent oaks, beeches, pines, and birches composed the Forêt des Elieux in which the camp was situated; a soft carpet of moss and pine needles, spotted with bright lozenges of yellow where the sun filtered through the leafy canopy, was its floor. Glorious vistas off into the Vosges greeted one from the end of such paths as led to the precipitous Roche aux Corbeaux. The rustic cottages of the officers, quaintly and artistically designed by the French, surrounded by men's barracks and mess shacks and connected by paths edged with stones, seemed to be a part of this untroubled sylvan refuge. There was little in the way of amusement here. It was just a haven of rest, beauty, and aromatic woodland odors; and no one paid the least attention to the booming of the guns up front.

Then there was Neufmaisons, that most attractive, by contrast, of dwelling places — Neufmaisons, always over-crowded, somewhat dirty, undeniably friendly, with its shifting soldier population, crooked streets, primitive

homes; but where roofs fended off the rains, and tiny stores now and then offered for sale nuts, oranges, and eggs; where there were good cooks to concoct omelettes that melted in the mouth, and mountains of golden-brown *frites*. A neat church gazed down placidly on the cluster of houses, each constructed after the manner typical of Lorraine — divided into two parts, one for the family and the other for the animals, all living together in perfect harmony, although the proximity of the cows rendered the atmosphere rather mellow, especially for the soldiers billeted overhead in the hay. Luscious and steaming piles of *fumier* stood guard before each dwelling and resisted indignantly the efforts of the Americans to remove them. They seemed to affect neither the French olfactory sense nor the death rate, for there seemed to be more people over ninety than under that age in Neufmaisons. The Verdurette, which ran the length of the village, was fed by sparkling springs, and would have been a joyous stream if it had not served as a general sewer for the community. But it gave its name to the premier café where one could spend the evening over glasses of *vin rouge,* and, when no one was watching, champagnes of the best vintage.

The social center of Neufmaisons, however, was the Y. In an old barn that had been worked over by the French into a *Foyer du Soldat,* Mr. Dillon, the first worker assigned to the town, labored to serve the needs of, and provide recreation and entertainment for, the battalions of the 168th as they rotated from that position to the lines, and for the members of the 151st Field Artillery, the 117th Engineers, and other detachments billeted in the town. There was none of the semi-luxury that marked some of the buildings of the home camps and

cities, and not too much comfort, but it answered a desperate need for diversion. There was a stage in one end and benches and a canteen where the *Paris Herald* and *Daily Mail,* hot chocolate, cakes, candy, cigarettes, and sundry necessities were offered for sale. The upper floor was converted into a reading and writing room furnished with tables, benches, and writing materials.

About ten days after the regiment returned from the Rambervillers area, a man fresh from the front strolled into the Y, paused, started, looked again, as if to make sure that his eyes were not playing him false, and then shouted "My God! An American woman." It was Mrs. Edith Knowles, soon to become affectionately known as "Mother" Knowles, who had left a home of culture, ease, and refinement to look after a family of several thousand boys whom she adopted at once. For more than two months she worked there, unselfishly enduring the discomforts, inconveniences, and drudgery with smiles. There is many a man who can recall with gratitude her cheerfulness, her gladly given bits of help and advice — and her unsurpassed cooking. Men, starved for the sight of home-recalling women of her type, walked for miles just to see her and to hear an "honest-to-God" American woman talk. Neufmaisons was as near the front as women workers were permitted, but subsequently Mrs. Knowles served under actual shell fire at Pannes in the St. Mihiel sector and at Apremont in the Argonne.

Some time later Mr. C. A. Sampson came to join the force as athletic director; and while equipment was inadequate and difficult to obtain, he soon had baseball, volley ball, and mass games in operation, and a stand erected in front of the Y was the scene of many a thrilling boxing match.

The excellent band of the 151st Field Artillery, which was stationed in Neufmaisons, was very generous, giving at least one concert every week at the Y and furnishing the music for special occasions. Under the direction of the indefatigable Mr. Dillon a program of entertainment that packed the house to capacity every night was developed. Sometimes there were entertainers from the Y circuit, but more often it was just movies and home talent, all of which met with unvarying success.

In order to give the observance of Mother's Day a homelike touch, Mrs. Knowles, with the aid of some volunteers from the army, worked until late Saturday night and from early Sunday morning till afternoon making over 1500 doughnuts for the celebration on May 12th, and every man in the village had one. After the entertainment in the evening, which had to be held out of doors because more than a thousand men attended, she was asked to deliver a speech, and her brief talk to the soldiers from the standpoint of a mother was a classic.

The men often overlooked, or were inclined to minimize, the great service of the Y with our regiment, because its presence was taken for granted, and few of the men realized the sacrifices its workers made or the handicaps under which they worked. It was not possible for the Y to follow us into active battle, but whenever the situation permitted the Y was always on hand. Two of its members perished in the gas attack on the 168th in the latter part of May, and Mr. Dillon was seriously wounded by a bomb in August near Fère-en-Tardenois.

In Neufmaisons the bright face of pleasure was sometimes clouded by new and exacting requirements as to discipline — formations at attention and saluting and things like that. The men accepted it philosophically —

if that was the game they would play it — but it did seem like a tax on a well-earned freedom. This matter was never openly discussed, but a man in C Company gave it expression one day in a totally unpremeditated remark at inspection. He had been patronizing the Café de la Verdurette, and had arrived at the point where his equilibrium as well as his thoughts was difficult to control. The officer in command of the formation noticed him weaving backward and forward and called out sharply, "You tall chap there in the rear rank, stand at attention."

The offender, looking up with an aggrieved expression, replied:

"Lieutenant, Sir, — I'm doing damned well to stand at rest."

The French people gathered the impression, at times, that the Americans were having difficulties with their language, but no American soldier was ever heard to admit that he was anything but a fluent conversationalist in the French tongue. The average vocabulary contained such words as *oeufs,* variously pronounced as erfs or just plain oofs; *monjay, cooshay, frites, omelettes, vin rouge, toot sweet, combien* — all pronounced with a magnificent disregard for phonetics and as no Frenchman had ever before heard them pronounced. *Oui* and *Oo la la!* were the only expressions in which they really approximated the proper accent, and these were somewhat overworked.

If the natives did not understand, the difficulty was usually laid to their stupidity. Some thought by waving the hands and interspersing here and there a "ze" and a "oui" that they could make themselves intelligible. Someone happened to be listening in on a conversation

between a French woman and an H Company man which ran something like this:

"Madame — ah — Mademoiselle — ah — Madame — vooly voo washa ze clothes for ze lieutenant? Wash, Madame? Yes, wash clothes. Compree — *compree*? What, you fathead, don't you understand your own language?"

A sergeant in K Company once volunteered to get some straw for the men in his section, no one else being able to think of the word. He marched up to the rosy cheeked madame, and after a proper salutation inquired:

"Madame, avvy voo straw — Straw? Compree straw?"

"Comprends pas."

"Too bad, boys, the old bird says she ain't got none."

The periods behind the lines presented the only opportunity that was offered the regiment to carry on the training that had been interrupted by the German drive, and the replacements had much more than that to make up.

In a quiet valley near Neufmaisons, pits were constructed where the men were given practical instruction in the handling and throwing of grenades, while nearby two ranges were improvised for practice with rifle, auto-rifle, machine guns, and pistols. Snipers were given what instruction was possible in the use of telescopic sights, and battalion scouts were trained in map reading and compass work. There was constant instruction on the methods of gas protection; frequent drills in adjusting the mask were given, and every man in the regiment was put through the gas chamber devised in Pexonne by the Medical Corps, or the one in Neufmaisons

superintended by Lieutenant Pardee, the Regimental Gas Officer.

The value of the gas mask and of speed in adjusting it was appreciated by all, but sometimes the men became inattentive to the constantly repeated instructions which were delivered over and over again in the same old phrases. An F Company sergeant attempted to overcome this by adopting a phraseology all his own. One day he was heard to address his platoon as follows:

"Fellow comrades, bring your gas masks to the alert position. Now you have on your manly chests what is known as the English respirator, the hood that stands between you and the horrors of Hell; without it you are lost, with it you are safe. You owe it what beauty owes the ass — a lot of good consideration. The face piece must be wiped dry after using."

"But, Sergeant", interposed a voice, "where do we get the rag?"

There is always one such voice in every crowd. The sergeant saw his address about to be stranded on the shoals of foolish questions, but he was equal to the situation.

"You have", he continued, "at the bottom of your shirt-tail four inches of perfectly good material that is as useless as the color of your eyes."

"Gas!"

In addition to attending formations, instruction, and drill, details were sent nearly every day to work on the second and third line trench systems which were being constructed to avoid any possibility of the Boche ever breaking through. As Neufmaisons was the headquarters of the 84th Brigade, it had to be kept particularly clean, and squads of soldiers were continually at work on the

streets, brandishing brooms made of twigs, or carting off to the fields the cherished manure which the peasants parted with reluctantly, although it was being put to its intended use without charge.

Behind Neufmaisons, up in the woods and commanding a view of the front, was Village Indien, a camp constructed by the French, similar to Ker Arvor, already mentioned as the headquarters and chief distributing point of the Supply Company. The chief attraction of this spot was a bath-house and an efficient apparatus by the unlovely but practical name of delouser. Every member of the regiment gladly submitted to the process of bathing and delousing whenever opportunity offered, for the few hours following the operation were the only time when the men were wholly free of their prolific and active companions, the cooties.

Pexonne, the half-way town, was pleasant, too; but it was too near the front for absolute comfort. As was to be proved later, it could be a dangerous place. All the civilians, from youngsters to grandparents, were equipped with gas masks — a necessary precaution in the region where one never knew what the Boche was going to do next. The Americans never saw them without being thankful that their own families were spared the continued strain and the menace of a perpetual danger.

It was strange to watch the peasants, women and old men, working in their well-tilled fields only a mile or so behind the lines, oblivious alike to shells breaking on the nearby road and the enemy airplanes circling overhead. Their duty was to raise crops to feed not only themselves but the heroic armies of the Republic, and they must not stop to think of personal danger. In fact they seemed to fear nothing but baths and night air; they ignored the

first and avoided the second in their hermetically sealed bedrooms.

Pexonne had its Y, too, presided over for the greater part of the time by the popular Mr. Patton, and there was something doing there every night. The Headquarters Company as well as Regimental Headquarters was permanently stationed in Pexonne, and those billeted in the village had the advantage of listening to concerts in the afternoon by the 168th Band, an organization which in the estimation of the regiment had no equal in all of the A. E. F. Once in a while the Band went over to Ker Arvor to cheer up the men recently out of the line, or journeyed back to Neufmaisons for a concert.

The first stage on the way to the front, after passing the "gas alert" zone where a sentry warned one to adjust his respirator, was the battered village of Fenneviller. It was a jungle of ruined buildings, and no other place in the sector filled so well the description of "deserted village". It looked as if it had seen no life for a century, but somewhere in its dark cellars detachments from the artillery, which had emplacements nearby, lived and made their home. Two kilometers up the camouflaged roadway lay the familiar ruin of Badonviller.

XVIII

MAY AND THE GAS ATTACKS

The first of May was ushered in with a bang. At two o'clock on the morning of that day a forty-eight hour continuous bombardment of the Boche lines commenced. Without the least let-up our artillery hammered the enemy positions unmercifully, concentrating chiefly on the sector in and opposite the Grand Bois in preparation for a raid which the Ohio regiment was to make through the Alabama sector, but showering sufficient high explosive and shrapnel across from the 168th to bring on a heavy retaliatory fire. Shells were whistling over us like a winter's wind. And what a satisfaction it afforded the men in the trenches and in the town of Badonviller to hear the 75's at work. On May 1st 20,000 rounds fell on the Boche opposite the Rainbow, and on the 2nd, 33,000. On the other hand, unexpected bombardments on the town caused many an ignominious retreat to the damp depths of the *abri,* and gradually chipped off more of the tottering church tower and increased the piles of crumbling masonry; but on the whole there were few casualties.

The object of this fire was presumably to keep the Boche low and to jolt his morale, and incidentally to give him plenty of time to withdraw from the threatened positions, for on the morning of the 3rd when two companies of the 166th went over the top at four o'clock and penetrated to the enemy fourth line they saw none of them.

From this time on, the average daily fire became greater than ever before, excluding, of course, the exceptional days of May 1st and 2nd; and as the enemy fire became much heavier without specific provocation, it was assumed that he had been reënforced in artillery and was himself preparing for further offensive action.

The 67th Artillery Brigade had, at the time of our reëntry into the sector, adopted a program of reprisal fire on a basis of two shots for every one that the enemy sent over, and now it was kept busy maintaining this ratio. The shelling of certain parts of our line called for reprisal fire on specified sections of the Boche system. If they shelled Daim, our batteries shelled Anglaise; if he fired on Cerf, Malgréjean, Colcombet, or Bizot, we replied on the Saillant de Bohême, Carrière Village, Trench des Affolés, and des Hêtres; or, if he bombarded Pexonne, Badonviller, or Fenneviller, then Parux, Bréménil, and Petitmont suffered in return.

It may have been partly due to the liveliness of our artillery that several Germans were induced to desert on the 3rd of May, the other reason being that they were of Alsatian birth and wished to escape enforced servitude in the German Army. Afraid of being shot down before they had a chance to explain their intentions, they worked down to the French lines on our right and entered from there. From them it was learned that their division, the 21st Landwehr, which had recently come from the Russian front, had relieved the 6th Cavalry Division in the Badonviller sector on the 29th of April. This division was to oppose us for the remainder of our stay in Lorraine.

In order to open the way for any additional unwilling followers of the Black Eagle who might wish to transfer

their services, a patrol was organized to post in the German trenches notices, written in both French and German, indicating how, when, and where to come through our lines.

This patrol, led by Lieutenant Bly of A Company, went out from the left of Congo the next night, planning to post their bills in the Mecklembourg trench in the vicinity of the Saillant de Bohême. They had reached the edge of the Boche wire without attracting attention, so they thought, and were about to cut through when a machine gun opened up on them at close range and instantly killed Private William R. Lyon of A Company. The fire was hot and close, and the four survivors realized that they were in a tight place, but Privates Nellis and Huffman, unmindful of their own danger, secured the body and started back with it. At this point Huffman was hit in the elbow by a machine gun bullet, and they had to drop their comrade in a shell hole. Private Fred E. Neely, the fifth member of the patrol, had a narrow escape when a bullet grazed his face, singeing an eyebrow. With Germans on three sides of them and no way to reply, the patrol found it necessary to retire.

The next day preparations were made to secure the body of Private Lyon. Stokes mortars and machine guns were brought up into a position where they could protect the searchers, and guided by Private Nellis, a small party from the Medical Detachment crossed No Man's Land and brought in the body. During the night the Germans had withdrawn from the position, and the patrol was permitted to complete its mission unmolested.

It was decided that this method of placing the necessary information before the would-be deserters was too

risky, so another was substituted. The French had a contrivance which could be fired from the V. B. rifle. Instead of showering the enemy with high explosive, upon detonation it showered him with propaganda tracts, well worded and calculated to present to him in an appealing manner the advantages of a sojourn behind the Allied lines. At varying intervals throughout the month and continuing into June these pamphlets were shot into the opposite trenches, a thousand packets at a time, from the posts of Chamois and Village Nègre. This general distribution of information took place at night and usually had the effect of stirring up artillery reaction on our front; but while the number of desertions was not great — owing more to the vigilance of the German officers and non-coms than to the lack of desire on the part of the men — the slight results justified the effort, as will be shown later.

Every now and then in the pleasant evenings, just at dusk when everything was at its quietest, the sound of music from the German side drifted to our lines — sometimes a band playing far back in Brémenil; sometimes a light-hearted Teuton singing in the opposite trench.

One evening an American patrol halted not far from the enemy line and listened as a rich tenor broke out into a song of Schumann:

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
Als alle Knospen sprangen,
Da ist in meinem Herzen
Die Liebe aufgegangen,

he sang, unconscious of his appreciative audience beyond the wire. It forcibly struck his audience, who had come to think of all Germans as beasts, that after all there

were some who were really human — some, who, in the midst of the carnage of war, could turn their thoughts to such foreign things as love and romance. Urged on by cries of "Schön, Schön" from his comrades, and the unspoken request of a group of unbidden listeners, he again sang of the lovely month of May. But night was fast falling, an eerie flare soared upward from the Boche line, a chattering machine gun took up the chorus, and the interlude was at an end.

The battalion reliefs were effected without difficulty. The Second Battalion, which had entered the line on the 25th of April, was relieved on the 1st of May by the First Battalion, Companies B and D dividing the eight-day period in Village Nègre, and A and C in Chamois. On the 9th the Third again took over the front. On the 15th of May, while M Company was occupying the right half of the regimental sector, the 168th suffered its first tragedy from the short firing of friendly artillery. Ever since the raid of March 5th the Americans had the greatest confidence in the French 75's; and the 151st Field Artillery, the Minnesota regiment that supported the 84th Brigade, merited the high reputation it had won for the efficient handling of these pieces. The difficulty, however, was not with the 75's, but with the heavy artillery.

On the evening of the 14th day of May, a new battery of 155's of the 150th Field Artillery opened up a bombardment on the Boche positions opposite Village Nègre, where the lines were close together. Because of faulty powder, an error in calculation, or for some other reason never determined by the infantry, a great many of the shells fell short on Congo, Dahomey, and Sénégal, necessitating the withdrawal of several of the advanced

posts. Word was immediately sent back to the artillery, and about midnight the firing ceased. But before dawn the next morning it was resumed, the shells coming over at five-second intervals and again falling short. Frantic signals to increase the range went up from the beleagured G. C.'s without effect. There was no direct telephonic communication with the heavy artillery, but back at P. A. 4, where the rush of wind from the low flying shells was so great that men were afraid to stand upright, efforts were made to relay the word through the 151st Field Artillery stations.

After a long night on duty a number of men were asleep in the P. C. at G. C. 7, so tired that even the deafening detonations did not waken them. It was here that the damage was done. Shortly before six o'clock a shell struck the side of the dugout near the entrance, pierced the wall, and exploded inside. Lieutenant Francis McIlvaine, Sergeant Clem Hobbs, who was sleeping beside him, and Private Max L. Hubbell were instantly killed, their shelter in the twinkling of an eye being transformed into their tomb. Private Irwin O. McConnelee was so badly wounded that he later died, and Private Louis L. Lueth was painfully but less seriously hurt. Private George Bolt was blown through the forward entrance and was found by the rescuing party blackened from burns from head to foot; although he recovered, which was miraculous enough, he was never able to rejoin his company at the front.

As soon as word of the disaster reached the P. A., details with tools and buckets were dispatched to the scene; but the initial explosion had set off all the rockets and grenades in the dugout, making it impossible for any one to go in. For an hour a horror-stricken group waited

for the fire to burn itself out, as there was no way of combating it.

In the meantime, before our own guns had been stopped, the Boche, scenting danger, turned his artillery on our lines. Before the day was well begun, his minenwerfer had killed Corporal Rimel of I Company and wounded the first sergeant and three privates of Captain Dunn's command, bringing up the total casualties to eleven.

The continued and daring ventures of our patrols finally shamed the Boche into action, and he made several ineffectual attempts at night to rush isolated posts on Congo, Daim, and Isard. The vigilance of our sentries and the lively reception offered the uninvited guests usually discouraged them before they got close enough to make it interesting. The enemy, however, managed to set foot for the second time inside our trenches in an attempted "silent" raid in the early morning of May 18th. If his plan was to surprise our men during the confusion of a relief, he had chosen his time with precision.

At twenty minutes after twelve, thirty minutes after the Second Battalion had completed its relief of the Third, a German patrol of from twenty to twenty-five men attempted to enter G. C. 11, just taken over by Lieutenant Creaton and the Second Platoon of H Company. Following a dead trench leading to the center of the G. C., without artillery or machine gun fire to warn of their approach, six or seven Boches broke through between posts 4 and 5.

The first indication of the presence of the enemy was when Privates Dahl and Whalen, on duty at Post 4, saw a dark form crawling along the edge of the trench toward

them. At the command "Halt" two of the enemy jumped into the trench, while three others hurdled it to get in the rear of the Americans. Assisted by others not in the trench, who grenaded the post, the two closed in on Dahl and Whalen. But our boys held their ground, and as the first German approached, Dahl made a lunge at him with his bayonet; but the treacherous mud was his undoing and he slipped and fell on his hands and knees. In a flash the German was on him and laid him flat with a blow on the head from his pistol.

Another member of the post, Private Roy H. Eaton, who was in the shelter trying to get a little sleep before his turn to go on watch, then rushed out, and seeing the German atop his comrade, grappled with him bare-handed. This time it was the German who was on the bottom, and Dahl regained his feet. Whalen, in the excitement of the moment, after firing a clip at the Boches on the parapet, caught his rifle in the bank and lost it. Then the pin of the grenade he picked up stuck, so he made a dive for the P. C. just as a "potato masher" exploded and caught Dahl in the back. Even this did not dismay him, and he started after the second Boche. Grenades now seemed to be flying from all directions, and the two had no idea as to how many of the enemy they had to combat. All this was happening in a few seconds, and they had to act by instinct, for there was no time to formulate any plan. Their instinct led them to fight regardless of the odds. In another moment one of the flying grenades hit Eaton full in the body, snuffing out his life as quickly as one extinguishes a candle. At the expense of his own, he had saved Dahl's life.

Dahl, now alone, picked up an automatic rifle, but as he fell flat to avoid a grenade, his adversary escaped. He

then discovered that the previous burst had sprung his weapon, so he threw it aside and rushed after the Germans, grenading them as they retreated.

Private Frank A. Brant, on a neighboring post, hearing the fight, started toward Post 4 as the Germans fled up the trench. He heard their quickened steps, and crouching behind a corner, lay in wait. His first shot struck the leading German below the lower right rib, whirling him completely around, at the sight of which the others jumped out of the trench and made for their lines. Brant and Corporal Norman K. Bruner, who had come on the scene, jumped on the wounded Boche, but Brant was forced to loose him with a cry as a grenade fragment tore his hand. The Boche, a giant in size, of powerful build, and apparently of indestructible composition, struggled up with Brant clinging to him, so the latter was forced to clout him over the head with his rifle; but even that did not seem to faze him, so the American finished him off with another shot.

In the meantime Privates Postel and Payne were firing with auto-rifle and grenades on the Germans scattering out through our wire. Several were seen to fall, but they were picked up and carried back. The entire engagement had lasted three minutes at the most, and was over before the rest of the post knew what was happening. It was evidently the intention of the Germans to swoop down upon an unsuspecting group, overpower them by sheer force of numbers, capture one or two, and then retire immediately. Instead of taking prisoners, they left one in our hands. It was the possibility of such encounters as this, even throughout long intervals of quiet and inactivity, that kept the men on duty in the firing trench constantly keyed up to the high pitch which gradually

sapped their vitality and made necessary the frequent reliefs. But the reaction in time of crisis was unvarying; when the men were brought face to face with death, they met their fate with a grim determination to go out bravely and to sell their lives at the highest price.

The next skirmish of note occurred on the afternoon of May 20th while a patrol of three men under Lieutenant Fisher of F Company was investigating some reported German works in the vicinity of Mecklembourg trench. At four o'clock this party stole out from PSI, G. C. 7. Entering the enemy first line without opposition, they completed their reconnaissance, and were assembled at the point of exit when the officer sighted what he believed to be an observation post some fifty yards in the interior. Posting Privates Irwin and Miller in the trench to cover their progress, Lieutenant Fisher and Private Carl Caviness followed down a small drainage sap to its end and then moved out on to the open ground. Here Fisher discovered an insulated wire running to the Boche rear; as he turned to cut it, a rifle shot rang out from the direction of the suspected post and a bullet grazed the officer's ear. Caviness dropped to the ground to avoid the shot, but Fisher sped on toward the shelter of the trench, and just as he threw himself on the parapet, a second bullet hit Caviness in a vital spot, killing him instantly. The Lieutenant then called one of the men on the covering post to join him, and together they watched over the dead body while the remaining man rushed back to PSI for aid.

Half an hour later the guide came back with Lieutenant Wallace, who had just returned to PSG from a similar reconnaissance farther to the right. Then in the face of enemy rifle fire, Private Irwin dashed out over the open

ground and brought the body to the Mecklembourg trench. On the way back they met Lieutenant Oscar B. Nelson of G Company with a stretcher, and Lieutenant Milliken with a covering party. These two had been in charge of still another patrol on the same mission, and as soon as they heard the firing they had set out for the seat of trouble. With the assistance of this party the body was brought back to PSI and turned over to the medical men.

The patrols of May were too numerous to be recounted in detail. They were as effective as they were daring, and in addition to maintaining the practical domination of No Man's Land they brought in information of increasing importance as to the plans and dispositions of the enemy.

When the First Battalion again came into the line on the 25th, B Company occupied the Chamois sector, with D in support in Badonviller, and C Company in Village Nègre was supported by A. At this time the Americans were no less anxious to secure a live prisoner than the Boches; and in order to stimulate interest in the matter, Lieutenant Ferguson, then commanding C Company, offered a reward of a hundred francs to the first man in C to capture a live German.

About 7:30 on the morning of the 26th Lieutenant Ferguson set out on a tour of his front line, stopping to chat with Lieutenant Priddy, who with his platoon was holding Soudan. It was a mild, pleasant morning, and the two officers sat down for a few moments on a bench near the dugout entrance. To their sudden amazement, as they were talking of nothing in particular, a German soldier appeared around the corner of the trench. Both

officers jumped to their feet, reaching for their pistols, Lieutenant Ferguson winning the draw.

"Who in Hell are you?", was his startled demand.

"An Alsatian, Sir", replied the soldier in clear English, "I came over to give myself up. See, here is my pistol."

Given an opportunity to explain himself, the prisoner stated that he was Leon Willard, thirty years of age, and a sergeant in the 20th Landwehr Regiment of the 21st Landwehr Division. He had lived in San Francisco for several years, and had a brother serving with the French Army. His sympathies were wholly with the Allies.

Ordinarily Alsatians were not permitted beyond the German wire, but that morning he had obtained permission to join a daybreak patrol, and soon after leaving the German trench he separated himself from his party and worked his way to our lines, waiting for an opportune moment to slip through after the night posts were taken off. He was not familiar with the terrain, and thought that he was coming through in the French sector.

As the mess detail was just coming up with the morning meal, Sergeant Willard was invited to breakfast. With reluctant politeness he replied that he had breakfasted before he left, but upon slight pressure he consented to take a bite. Judging by his appetite, it was assumed that the German trench breakfast at this time was a very light one. At the conclusion of the meal, which Willard said was the best he had tasted in years, Lieutenant Ferguson formally presented himself with the hundred francs reward, and then took his guest to the Battalion P. C. and thence to Regimental Headquarters

where he was questioned further and turned over to the French authorities.

The examination of the prisoner resulted in valuable information as to the location and disposition of the enemy troops, but most important of all was the warning of a contemplated gas attack on our position. Willard reported the presence of specialists in gas warfare in Cirey, the headquarters of his division, and stated that he believed an attack was to be launched within the next two weeks. He was so certain of the preparations and urged so insistently that we be on our guard against attack that special warning was sent out that evening to every post of the regiment. During the night of the 24th-25th sounds of hammering, piling of lumber, and driving of stakes in the Saillant de Bohême had been reported; and on the following morning the divisional observers had noted two companies of Germans maneuvering behind their lines. Had these two facts been connected by the Intelligence Department, it would not only have indicated the imminence of an attack but the approximate sector chosen for its execution.

Having reason to believe from statements of Willard that there might be other German soldiers in our vicinity wishing to give themselves up, Lieutenant Priddy set out with a patrol from Soudan at 4:30 in the afternoon of the 26th to see if he could round up any of them. It happened that the Boche had a patrol out at the same time (in all probability searching for their missing sergeant), and the two parties clashed in No Man's Land not far from the German lines. Our men sighted the Boches first, and immediately opened fire, inflicting some casualties at the first volley. But the enemy replied with spirit, and fearful of being caught by a cross fire from the German

trenches, our patrol wisely withdrew to our lines, having suffered no losses.

The Germans were obviously piqued at the trend of affairs and resolved to even up matters. About half past eight, as darkness was gathering the sector in its shadow, a party of sixty or seventy Boches was reported approaching PSL, one of the outpost positions of Soudan. Hastily collecting a few reserves, Lieutenant Priddy rushed to the threatened post, and got there just in time, for the enemy patrol was about to march in, attempting to put over the shop-worn ruse — the old, old *Kamerad* game that had been so overworked that to attempt to repeat it was an insult to the intelligence of any soldier.

They were bold enough about it. The whole party advanced, hands overhead, calling *"Kamerad"* as they came. Lieutenant Priddy let them come as far as he thought safe, and then halted them. From their midst emerged a spokesman, who announced in good English that they wished to give themselves up to the Americans. The lieutenant admitted that the idea was a good one, and directed them to enter our lines at a designated spot one at a time.

That upset their plan entirely. The leaders held a moment's consultation, and then bunching up, some of them still calling *"Kamerad"*, they made ready to rush the line. Priddy hesitated just a second to make sure of their intention, and then gave the order to fire. The blast of rifle, auto-rifle, and grenade fire from the outpost caught the enemy full in the center. A number were seen to fall, and the piteous cries of the wounded indicated that the casualties were heavy. That decided them and the whole crowd broke in confusion and started

for their lines, every man for himself, in spite of the attempts of an officer to check them.

About a hundred and fifty yards away, in the vicinity of the old Mecklembourg trench, the officer managed to halt the retreating mob. Berating them in no uncertain terms, he lined his men up again in squad formation, and could be heard counting in German, *"Ein, Zwei, Drei, Vier"*, in preparation for a second attempt.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Priddy had strengthened his line and had secured a machine gun from the garrison of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion. The gunner found a good position atop one of the dugouts, and when the Germans again came within range they met with a reception even warmer than the first. The fight lasted for nearly a half hour, and it had got quite dark before the Germans finally gave up the attempt to break through. Aided by the thickening dusk, a few daring Boches got close enough to hurl grenades into our trench. With deliberate coolness, combined with quickness of wit, Corporal Vester A. Benson saved several of his men by kicking a sizzling grenade around the corner of the traverse, and in so doing was himself wounded in the leg and foot. One group of the enemy tried to flank the post from the left, but were discovered in time and driven off after one of their number was sacrificed to the marksmanship of Private Silas M. Teig. It was then that they admitted to themselves the futility of further efforts to get in by withdrawing for good, taking with them their dead and wounded, but leaving most of their weapons behind. The men at Soudan had been kept on edge practically all day; but there was no relaxing yet, for the warning had gone out that another attack by the enemy could be expected before daybreak.

Throughout that afternoon and well into the night the Germans had heavily bombarded our batteries, employing more gas than anything else, which caused some casualties among the gun crews of the 151st Field Artillery. This was an added reason for the suspicions which were so disastrously substantiated before morning. About midnight there was a complete cessation of fire, and during the lull many found the sleep that had been denied them too long.

At 12:55 on the morning of the 27th a terrific crash, which might have been the explosion of a gigantic mine, rocked the entire sector from the front line back to Pexonne. Buildings shook as if in the clutch of a mighty earthquake, and the sky glowed red with a sudden flash. Those behind the lines knew that something terrible had happened, while those in it, dazed by the unexpectedness of the shock, hardly knew what to expect. A few seconds later hundreds of bulky missiles, wobbling through the air with a sickening rush, exploded in their midst, and terrified shouts of "Gas!" warned them that they were in for that greatest of horrors, a night gas attack. Gas is the one weapon that is more effective by night than by day, for darkness only heightens its effect, and the terror, confusion, and bewilderment is increased a hundredfold. In a moment half the battalion area was suddenly drenched with the concentrated fumes of phosgene gas, one whiff of which is enough to kill.

Some of the men on post were lucky; they recognized the popping peculiar to gas projectiles and got their masks on in time; but as the attack came without the slightest warning and at a time when the majority of the men were asleep, many were caught before they had time to adjust their masks. The guards at the dugouts did

everything in their power to warn their comrades inside, some of them even neglecting to put on their own masks in their efforts to waken the men; but in many instances projectiles burst at the very entrance, blowing in the doors and gas curtains, and immediately flooding the interior with the deadly vapor.

The concentration proved heaviest on Cerf, the right of B Company's line; on Soudan, the left post of C Company; on Bizot, one of C Company's support positions; and on A's support position at Village Nègre.

To add to the distress of this frightful night, the German artillery directed a violent bombardment on the area deluged by the gas. The projectors had been ranged with diabolical accuracy, and now came shrapnel and high explosive to paralyze the stunned men groping about in the dark and to prevent them from reaching the open air and safety.

Many were the lives risked and lost that night in the heroic work of relief. Lieutenant Priddy, utterly fatigued by the strain of the previous day and caught by the first wave of gas, remained on duty until late the next morning caring for the men of his platoon. It was from this vicarious sacrifice that he died two days later. In recognition of his devotion to duty, he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Lieutenant Clarence R. Green of A Company, too, gave his life in his efforts to save his men. Rushing through the dark with his gas mask on, he made his way about the trenches, warning all of the danger, but finding his progress slow, and that he could not make himself plainly heard, he removed his mask from time to time until every one in the post was aroused. The gas he inhaled in this

way caused his death shortly after reaching the hospital the next morning.

Sergeant Gordon E. Perry of C Company, although gassed himself, assisted in carrying patient after patient to the first aid station, and so aggravated his own condition that he died as a result.

Mr. Hedley Cooper and Mr. Halliday Smith, two Y men who had been operating the canteen at Village Nègre, were on their way back from Soudan when the gas caught them. They thought not of themselves but of the struggling, agonized men about them, and rendered the most valuable assistance, working until they fell from exhaustion. That night saw the last of their good deeds, for they both breathed their last in an ambulance on the way to the rear.

Up in the front line men lay on the ground awaiting their turn to be carried in on a stretcher, fighting through their respirators with tortured, spasmodic gasps for the relief that would not come to their burning, choking lungs. Handicapped by masks and darkness, the tireless stretcher-bearers made trip after trip to the aid station on the road near Village Nègre. Some of the victims, delirious in their suffering, pushed their masks from their faces and had to be restrained forcibly.

Soon the aid station was filled, and the surrounding yard lined with blanketed figures stretched out on the ground. Lieutenant Van Meter worked tirelessly, doing what little was possible in the way of first aid, but one after another silenced, rigid forms were carried into the rustic building that sheltered the bodies of the dead.

Long before daybreak the ambulances began to come and go in a steady stream carrying the sufferers to Baccarat where oxygen treatment was available. Al-

VICTIMS OF THE FIRST GAS ATTACK BEING CARRIED
INTO THE EVACUATION HOSPITAL AT BACCARAT

THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF CAPTAIN FLEUR AND OTHERS
KILLED IN THE GAS ATTACK OF MAY 27TH. BACCARAT

BURIAL OF THE VICTIMS OF THE GAS ATTACK OF MAY 27TH. BACCARAT, MAY 28TH

FRENCH CHILDREN DECORATING RAINBOW GRAVES IN MILITARY CEMETERY AT BACCARAT, MEMORIAL DAY, 1918

though they were plainly visible after dawn, the Boche, probably satisfied and elated at this evidence of damage, refrained from firing on them, and until sunset that night they sped unharmed to and fro with their burdens.

With the coming of daylight the gas was gradually dissipated, but the air was not entirely cleared until noon. Few cases were reported from the flanks of the poisoned area; Congo and Dahomey, on high ground at the right of the Village Nègre line, and likewise the post at the left, received practically none of the gas. But the heavy vapor had so drifted down the valleys that it was necessary to wear masks in the surrounding area, including the town of Badonviller, for hours after the attack.

Early in the morning Lieutenant Witherell with a small patrol of the First Battalion Scouts reconnoitered out in front of Soudan where the Germans had attempted to come in on Priddy. After covering No Man's Land as far as Mecklembourg trench he returned with the body of the Boche shot down by Private Teig.

Just at this time the so-called "Three Day Fever" epidemic was at its height, and as its symptoms were similar to those of gassing, the Medical Corps took no chances, but sent all temperature cases to the hospital. As the day wore on, men who thought they were only slightly gassed developed serious symptoms as a result of the insidious effects of the phosgene and had to be taken to the rear. Before long, A and C Companies had lost more than half of their strength, and the rest were nearly all suffering either from gas or from the fever.

The effects of the gas were everywhere apparent. Everything was dead — animal and vegetable life alike had been killed by the fumes. Messenger pigeons lay in

their baskets; rats, swollen and distended, were stretched out in the trenches and dugouts; and the few stray cats which had made their homes in the vicinity had suffered a similar extinction. The whole area looked as if it had been visited by a killing frost — leaves and grass were seared and yellow — and over all hung the sweet, musty odor of phosgene that lingered most persistently in the low places and deep trenches.

From reconnaissance, airplane photographs, and other sources of information, it was learned that the Boche had set up, in two emplacements, six hundred projectors for the attack on an 800 meter front. One group located in *les Carrières de Badonviller* near the Bréménil road directed its fire upon Cerf and Soudan; and the other, in the Trench des Affolés, had Bizot and the reserve position at Village Nègre as its target.

Their shells were eighteen centimeters in diameter, each containing about two gallons of liquid phosgene. They were fired from high angled tubes, similar to trench mortars, connected in batteries of one hundred and discharged simultaneously by electricity. The projectiles contained just enough explosive to burst them on impact, thus liberating the liquid which immediately vaporized into heavy gas.

The emplacements were constructed only a day or so before the attack and the mortars were removed before dawn the next day. According to German pamphlets later issued, this was the largest and most concentrated projector attack attempted by our enemy during the entire war, and it was the *chef d'oeuvre* of the scientific specialists who had been in Cirey for weeks planning and developing it.

The first report that reached the rear was that A and

C Companies were wiped out, and while the later news was less disquieting it was sickening enough. The total casualties were nearly two hundred, including thirty-seven who were either killed outright or who died soon afterward.

Captain Edward O. Fleur of the Machine Gun Company, who had taken over the positions of Company D, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, in Village Nègre less than an hour before, was a victim of the deadly deluge, dying in the ambulance. Captain Aikins of A Company refused to admit that he had been gassed and remained at his post of duty with his company, going to the aid station only upon the direct order of Captain Ross, his battalion commander. There he collapsed, and his case proved so serious that he never returned to the regiment. Lieutenants Riley of the Machine Gun Company, Severe of A, and Ferguson and Silver of C Company, all inhaled enough of the phosgene to send them to the hospital for a long period.

Of all the posts, the platoon of C Company at Soudan was hit the hardest. Sergeant Jesse F. Tillman had been taken ill with the three day fever while serving at Congo with Lieutenant Wurster's platoon, and having become delirious just before the attack had been removed to the aid station. It was here that he received the gas that caused his death, for he was caught before anyone could adjust his respirator. A Company lost sixteen killed; the platoon of B on Cerf, four; the Machine Gun Company, two in addition to its captain; Headquarters Company, three — Private Larson, who was on duty at the telephone exchange at Village Nègre Headquarters, and Privates Huxtable and Anderson, who were on duty in the line.

It was necessary during the afternoon of the 27th to send to the first aid station at Village Nègre a complete change of personnel. Lieutenant Van Meter, who had labored heroically over his suffering charges, was relieved by Lieutenant Leir. There is no praise too great for the litter-bearers and the members of the Sanitary Detachment who struggled for hours on end under the most impossible of conditions with only one thought — to care for the wounded. It was the spirit that seized every able-bodied man at the front.

The effect of this frightful disaster was to settle over the entire regiment a pall of gloom which in time gave way to bitter anger and a determination to make the Boche pay in full for every life he took, for every man he put to torture.

With such a cut in its numbers, the First Battalion was in need of reënforcement. All of A Company and part of C had to be relieved. That morning Lieutenant Noble's platoon of K Company took over Sénégal and Soudan, with Lieutenant Spaulding of D Company in command of the latter post; and L Company, under Lieutenant Lainson, assumed control of the reserve position at Village Nègre. Thirty of the survivors of A, officered by Lieutenant Bernard Van't Hof of M, replaced the battered platoon of B Company at Cerf.

The entire command was more or less affected by the fever epidemic, and those in the line were feeling the strain heavily. Both officers and men who really belonged in the hospital stuck to their posts because they realized the necessity of their presence there, for all the time it was felt that the Boche had still another blow in store. The medical men behind the lines were swamped with patients. A regimental hospital with a capacity of twelve

beds had been established at Pexonne; but this, of course, could accommodate but the smallest percentage of the invalids, for at this time there were several hundred men incapacitated for duty, and before the fever had run its course perhaps as many as ninety per cent of the regiment had been affected. The hospitals in Baccarat were crowded with wounded and gassed patients, so temporary company hospitals were established in the rear areas to look after our own.

All day long on the 27th our batteries shelled the enemy — over five thousand shells finding their target in the sector opposite the 168th — but no matter how great the destruction it might cause the Boche, it could not make up for our loss. That night the entire line stood alert in anticipation of new developments; but the long, anxious hours passed without incident.

The next afternoon at Baccarat, in the presence of the general officers of the Division and Colonel Bennett, another sorrowing band bared their heads and wept as the first victims of the gas were added to the community of our dead in the final peace of the little cemetery on the hillside. Captain Fleur and Lieutenant Green were laid next to Captain McHenry with seventeen of their men grouped about them.

At ten o'clock on the night of the 28th Captain Ross was warned by the French intelligence service, which had a branch in the Chasseurs sector on our right, to be on the lookout for trouble either at 1:30 or 4:30 the following morning. The intelligence service was a delicate organization, and it frequently had its suspicions aroused more by instinct than by actual indications, as a result of which its premonitions sometimes amounted to nothing. But in the present unsettled state of affairs, the

battalion commander lost no time in passing the warning to each of his companies, waiting only long enough to do a little sum in arithmetic which undoubtedly saved many lives before daybreak. He remembered that the watch of the German sergeant who had come in on the 26th had been set an hour in advance of Allied time, and there was every chance that the information of the French service was based on some conversation picked up by their listening-in wires and had reference to German time. So instead of alerting his men at 1:30, he subtracted an hour and made it 12:30.

During the day and early evening there had been noticeable activity in the enemy lines opposite the right of our sector, accompanied by artillery and machine gun fire, and hostile planes had been hovering over in observation. Fearing an attack on Village Nègre, Captain Ross ordered a machine gun barrage to be laid down in front of Congo at 12:15 A. M. This must have seriously interfered with German plans, which, as later events proved, were then maturing at this point.

As the hour of the threatened trouble approached, the men in the front lines nervously glanced toward the silent Boche position, or up at the moonlit sky, from which they knew not what to expect, their fingers involuntarily straying to their gas masks, hearts thumping; and wondering. Almost precisely at half past twelve another rending crash, another blinding flash, none the less terrifying because it was expected, and then the rush of wind, the dull thud and sharp popping of the drums as they sprayed forth their lethal contents. This time the concentration was not so heavy, for the enemy had reset but 250 or 300 of his projectors; but the artillery fire was much more violent, and for an hour a

bombardment of crushing intensity churned up our sector. Our men were ready for the attack. About a quarter of an hour after the launching of the gas the faint outline of Germans creeping up toward Soudan was distinguished, and a call by signal for a barrage was so quickly answered by the Minnesota gunners that the attack on that post was thwarted without need for infantry action.

Lieutenant Wurster's half platoon, which had already withstood the shock of one gas attack, was still holding the position at Congo. Earlier in the night Wurster had arranged with Lieutenant Peterson for a Stokes barrage in case of emergency, and he soon had use for it.

A party of Germans had broken through the machine gun barrage and pushed forward up to our wire which they breached in three places with petards. As soon as they were detected, Lieutenant Wurster gave two blasts of his whistle and the Stokes mortars unlimbered. A passing liaison patrol was pressed into service as ammunition carriers, and in less than twenty minutes over four hundred Stokes shells fell among the would-be raiders.

At first it looked as if the enemy would break through. They succeeded in setting up a machine gun within a few yards of the blockhouse that was used by our men as a day observation post, and one German got as far as the sap leading back to the fire trench; but that was as close as any of them got, for the fire of the Stokes and our rifles were too deadly, and they had to withdraw.

The men at all other points along the line in Village Nègre forgot both sickness and fatigue, and presented such an unbroken defense that the enemy was shut off from every attempt to reach our positions. During this

action Lieutenant Wood was in command of Dahomey, and Lieutenant Amory A. Miller, with one man, composed the sole reserve at Guelfucci.

Although this was the most general attempt the Boches had yet made to penetrate at Village Nègre, this part of the operation was but a diversion from the main thrust aimed at the weakest point on the Chamois front, G. C. 11 — Daim. The vulnerability and accessibility of this post have already been mentioned, and as in the raids of March 5th and May 17th this was the only point where the enemy broke through.

It happened that the Second Platoon of B Company, which had received the Croix de Guerre for the defense of this position on March 5th, was again in occupation of Daim with the same intrepid officer, Lieutenant Howard G. Smith, in command. The strength of the platoon was reduced to twenty-five men, and they, owing to the inroads of the fever, were not in the best of fighting trim.

Soon after the launching of the gas on the right, the German artillery surrounded G. C. 11 with a box barrage and left it to the mercy of the waiting raiders. In three groups they entered through the openings blown in our wire, and headed for the main dugout. There were fifty-two men and two officers in the party, one of the officers and two of the men being pioneers. The remainder included ten men from each of the companies of the First Battalion of the 20th Landwehr Regiment and ten men from the Scouts — picked men, younger and of better physique than the average of their command. Half of them were armed with carbines, knives, and grenades; the other half with pistols, clubs, and incendiary bombs. They had the usual instructions to take prisoners at any cost. After their numerous futile attempts to capture a

live American, the German Staff was getting desperate and determined to have one if it had to sacrifice a whole company, so it was later learned.

The enemy artillery had dropped just enough gas shells in the vicinity to give some realism to the fake Klaxon alarm which they sounded as they entered our lines, hoping in this way to catch our men while hampered with their masks. The scheme worked, for no one knew where the signal came from; and having seen the burst of the drums of phosgene a few minutes before, and having heard gas shells exploding near them, they all adjusted their respirators. The mistake was soon discovered at the P. C. and Private Glen P. Shephard started through the trenches to tell the men to remove their masks. He reached the post of Private Russell E. Marshall just as the latter fell back into the trench with a bullet through his head. Marshall had climbed up on the parapet to get a better shot at the enemy with his Chauchat, and had already laid out two before the heavy fire he drew upon himself ended in his death.

Sergeant William V. McMurray in another part of the line surprised one of the three German groups about to jump into the trench and brought down two, leaving their bodies hanging limply over the parapet. Suddenly he was aware of Lieutenant Smith at his side, and the two of them, although out-numbered eight to one, routed the party, killing five or six. One of these had run down the trench toward the officer yelling "*Kamerad*", but the Germans had yelled that too many times when they didn't mean it, and he sank, shot through the heart, a pistol gripped in one hand and a "potato masher" in the other.

In the meantime one of the parties had got in from

behind, and for a while it was a bad looking situation. Every man on the post was fighting for his life, not knowing what was happening to the rest of the garrison, although the explosions and flashes over the entire G. C. indicated trouble everywhere. It seemed that Germans were around every corner, throwing an unlimited supply of grenades.

Farther down the line Corporal McKinney ran onto a Boche who was engaged in a silent death-struggle with Corporal Carl J. Lechner. He transfixed the German with his bayonet, but had come too late to save the life of his friend, for in the encounter Lechner had received fatal wounds. A few yards away Private Earl S. King was mortally wounded in an unequal fight with a group that came on him from two directions.

Private Gerald A. Rodgers, on post alone at the dugout entrance, was suddenly beset by four of the Boches. One of their first shots crippled his leg; but he was far from out of the fight. Bracing himself against the side of the trench to get the support his shattered leg could not give, he emptied his pistol into the group, wounding three of them and putting the fourth to flight.

Lieutenant Smith, who had expended all his ammunition and was rushing in for more, discovered, not far from the P. C., a party of the enemy in an interior trench parallel to the one he was in. They, too, had got in from the rear, and were about to pounce on some post frontally engaged. Grabbing a handful of grenades, the platoon commander, seconded by Sergeant McMurray, attacked the invaders, who after a short exchange of bombs gave themselves up. There were five of them, and they turned out to be the only live Germans left in our lines.

Although every post had been swarming with the

enemy and we had been so greatly outnumbered, the remainder of the enemy patrol had beat a hasty retreat, carrying off with them as many of their casualties as they could manage, but without a single American prisoner. Behind them they left nine of their men dead and five suffering from wounds, two of whom died the following day. The three survivors, all from the Second Company of the 20th Landwehr, were Herman Haas, a perfect type of Prussian *Unteroffizier,* and two youths of eighteen years, Wilhelm Nagel and Emil Grohman, both of whom, although badly frightened at first, appeared delighted to have done with the war for good.

Village Nègre, which had maintained an unbroken front against the enemy, was suffering from the gas and artillery. Lieutenant Wolcott of L Company was seriously wounded in the hip by a shell fragment while making a round of his post, and Lieutenant Thompson of the same company was gassed on his return from an inspection of the front. Private Hazard was fatally gassed because his jaw was broken by a piece of flying shrapnel and it was impossible for him to keep his mask on. In all, three lost their lives and one sergeant, five corporals, and nine privates were gassed in L Company.

During this second attack the enemy sent gas shells into Badonviller and Pexonne. At the latter place a number of men were gassed. A total of seventy-six casualties was reported for the night, including Captain Bunch of the Medical Detachment who was slightly gassed while on duty at the aid station. Later on, owing to their losses from the gas, the second relief of the Sanitary Detachment at Village Nègre had to be replaced by a third sent to the regiment from the Division Sanitary Train.

Again warnings came to the line that the Boche was to continue his attack on that night and that the raiders this time were to be equipped with liquid fire apparatus. Whatever his plans may have been, the raid of the 29th of May was the last infantry attack attempted by the enemy while the 168th remained in this sector. No doubt it had finally occurred to the German command that raids which always yielded us prisoners, and them none, were hardly profitable to the cause of the Fatherland.

Under normal conditions, the First Battalion would have remained in the line until the 1st of June, and would then have been relieved by the Third, but Captain Ross's command had already suffered both from casualties and sickness, and a company and a half of the Third Battalion, thrown in for the emergency, had lost in the second attack. For this reason Major Stanley's battalion, having had but five days' rest, was called upon to take over the line again on the 30th of May. F Company relieved B in the Chamois sector, and E Company freed C and part of K in Village Nègre. G and H assumed the two support positions, but G had to replace F Company in the line on the 2nd of June because of sickness in the latter. This left but one platoon to act as support in Chamois.

A visitor in Pexonne in the late afternoon of May 30th would have thought himself about to witness some gala event. The little children of the village, looking very prim and neat and self-conscious in their best clothes, were passing through the streets carrying fresh bouquets of garden flowers. But had he followed the procession to the little parish cemetery, he would have witnessed a touching ceremony. It was Memorial Day, the day set

aside by Americans for the honoring of those who have given their lives for their country, and the youth of Pexonne was taking the flowers to lay on the graves as an expression of gratitude and reverence to those Americans who had fallen in the defense of their own Lorraine.

They were young, these children, very young to know the meaning of war, but for four years it had been their close companion. Three times the enemy had invaded their village, and they had never been out of range of the guns that constantly threatened them. They had grown up in the midst of alarms and ambulances, and their homes had sheltered troops, either fresh from the line or about to court its dangers. Seventy-fives had broken their sleep at night, pounding away from beneath their very windows; enemy airplanes had spied on them at their play; and they kept their gas masks close at hand.

It seemed to the weary, dirty, half-sick soldiers of the First Battalion, suddenly reminded of the day as they plodded through Pexonne that evening on their way back to rest, that these children were doing for our fallen comrades exactly what they would have wished to have done. It was a very beautiful thing, for there could be no ritual more fitting than the placing of flowers on the graves by these children of the war.

In the center of the hollow square formed by French and American soldiers, over the fresh-made mounds of our sleeping dead, General Brown, Colonel Bennett, and Chaplain Robb spoke appropriate words. The salute of honor was fired for those who had heard their last call. Then, as the flaming sun was sinking to rest, bathing the bowed gathering in a ruby glow, the plaintive, poignant notes of Taps sounded and, caught by the evening breeze, floated off to the silent forest.

XIX

THE LAST WEEKS IN LORRAINE

From Memorial Day until the 20th of June, when the regiment was relieved, our line and support positions were subjected to frequent artillery action, and on several occasions both Badonviller and Pexonne came in for severe punishment. While our supremacy in No Man's Land was hotly contested, it was never seriously threatened, although the regiment lost a number of prisoners one day when one of our patrols clashed with the enemy.

The Second Battalion held the line until the 7th of June, when the Third went in to remain until the final relief. On the 15th the regimental front was increased to a continuous line of 5300 meters by the inclusion of the Chasseurs sector which the First Battalion of the 165th, under Major Donovan, had been holding for the two weeks previous.

On the 31st of May two more deserters, this time from the 35th Landwehr Regiment, entered our lines at the right of Village Nègre. They readily informed us that new shock troops, which were to be used in an attack in the Village Nègre district, had arrived behind their lines. The Boche was still determined to have American prisoners, and was equally determined to punish us for frustrating his previous attempts.

Early the following morning, through a conversation between two German officers picked up by the French listening-in service, we learned of the recent concen-

tration in Cirey of large quantities of gas shells, trench mortar bombs, and heavier calibres. That the Germans had planned an operation in this district was later confirmed from several other sources, but it never materialized. It is probable that our patrol activity and the two encounters in No Man's Land which developed within the next fortnight caused the enemy to either cancel or postpone his project.

In preparation for the expected assault new machine gun positions were selected so that every pass should be covered by enfilade fire; ranges were refigured to insure accuracy, and a detachment from the 149th Machine Gun Battalion came up to take positions in the valley, thereby greatly strengthening our lines. At the same time it was learned that an entire regiment of French artillery had come to reënforce the sector, and that a battalion of French storm troops had just come in. If they weren't looking for trouble, they must have been intending to start some.

Probably due to the threatening situation, our plan of defense was radically altered. On the 3rd of June, in compliance with instructions from French Headquarters, Colonel Bennett issued orders for the evacuation at night of certain of our G. C.'s. The forward trenches were no longer to serve as the line of resistance but were to be regarded distinctly as an outpost position.

Congo and Dahomey, at the right of the Village Nègre line, alone were exempted from the change and were to be maintained in full strength as necessary strong points. In every other G. C. the day force was cut to thirteen men — an officer, a sergeant, three corporals, and eight privates — and at night the garrison was reduced to a

small outpost of one non-com and three privates. The reliefs were effected at 9:30 P. M. and 4:30 A. M.

The larger force was kept in the first line during the day merely to prevent the enemy from discovering the change in our defensive scheme. The main body of each company in the line remained at the P. A. In the event of an enemy attack the outposts were to withdraw, signaling by rocket to the artillery. Then when the invaders reached our trenches, our guns, which had the exact range, would bombard them and by means of a box barrage prevent their retirement — in case there were any left to retire. The remainder of the company would then launch a counter-attack from the second line, following closely the lifting of the barrage from our forward trenches, with the intention of capturing or destroying any of the enemy remaining in the position. The Stokes, Trench Mortar, 37mm, and Machine Gun units were also directed to fall back into positions selected for the defense of the second line. It was a neat plan and one which General Gouraud adopted on a larger scale to such great advantage in the battle of the Champagne the next month.

This new disposition was put into effect by the Second Battalion and was continued by the Third after the 7th of June. That evening Company I took over the Village Nègre line, and Company K the Chamois, with M and L in the corresponding support positions. With the addition of the Chasseurs front, occupied during the last five days by Company L, the Third Battalion enjoyed the distinction of holding the longest continuous stretch of front line.

On the day that Major Brewer relieved Major Stanley for the last time in Lorraine there was another change in

RUE GAMBETTA, BADONVILLER

CAMOUFLAGED ROAD FROM PEXONNE TO BADONVILLER

LOWER PART OF BADONVILLER WRECKED BY SHELL FIRE

OFFICERS' QUARTERS, CAMP DE KER ARVOR. CHAPLAIN ROBB, AND LIEUTENANTS BOYNE AND WILLIAMS OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT

the regiment. Major Conkling, who had been a loyal member of the organization since the days of the Philippine expedition, was promoted to the directorship of the divisional field hospitals, and in time became commander of the 117th Sanitary Train. He was replaced by an officer of exceptional ability and unlimited physical endurance and courage, Captain Henry Bunch — a strapping, genial South Carolinian, one of the first American officers to see active service in France, who had come to us a month before, directly from the British front.

It was with unpleasurable anticipation, though not in idleness, that the regiment awaited the heralded blow. Each day, lest our apprehension decrease, warning came to be prepared for an attack that evening or the next morning. There were continued indications of work in the Boche lines, and it was evident that they were being held more strongly than formerly, for rifle and grenade fire directed from them upon our patrols was distinctly heavier. Altogether, the enemy was exhibiting a more aggressive spirit. The hostile aerial activity became abnormal and circulation behind his line more pronounced; there was an almost constant movement of wagons, with frequent arrival and switching of trains. Small detachments of the enemy were seen marching and drilling in the rear areas. All of this led to an inevitable conclusion — an attack in force.

Our observers had especially noted an unusual activity in the German second line about four hundred yards in front of Soudan, on the reverse slope of the hill so thickly covered with live and fallen trees and entanglements that direct observation was impossible. Night and day there were sounds of construction from this point, and Major Stanley feared that the Boche was preparing for another gas attack.

The first attempt to inquire into the purposes of the enemy was made by Sergeant Albert F. Martin of H Company and Private Harry E. McLain of E, both members of the Second Battalion Scouts. They set out from Soudan by daylight on the 3rd of June and after crossing Mecklembourg were attacked by a party of Germans not far from Hêtres trench. On account of the superior force opposing them, they had to retire before they could obtain the necessary information. Upon returning to our lines a stronger party was recruited; but this, too, was driven off by the enemy.

The knowledge that the Germans were determined to prevent our reconnaissance of the ground upon which their works were being constructed made it all the more imperative that we investigate these new works, so a powerful patrol was organized to force the issue and gain the information. This party was made up of forty-two men: three auto-rifle teams of three men each from Company H, three men from Company G, and thirty of the Battalion Scouts, all under Lieutenant Herbert F. Wallace.

Knowing that they would have to break through a position strongly held and on the alert, and that a mix-up was almost certain, the men who slipped out into No Man's Land at 2:30 on the morning of June 5th had every prospect of excitement. The first group, led by Sergeant Martin, consisted of an auto-rifle team and eight riflemen. They went out from Soudan on the right flank, with instructions to proceed to Hêtres trench and secure definite information as to construction and location of posts. A second group, of similar personnel, under Sergeant Templeton, left from Cerf to act as protection on the left flank; and the third, with the remainder, under

Lieutenant Wallace, went out from Soudan with the first to act as support, taking up its position between Mecklembourg and Hêtres trenches, between the other two detachments.

The patrol reached its position by 3:00 A. M., and between then and daylight Sergeant Martin carried on a most successful reconnaissance. He discovered a new line of trenches under construction far in the interior near the old narrow gauge railway where working parties had been observed, and found that improvements were being made in Hêtres, consisting chiefly of repairing the damage caused by our artillery. A new dugout, recently occupied, was also uncovered.

Although the patrol had proceeded this far unharmed, it turned out that the Germans were aware of its presence and were awaiting a favorable opportunity to cut it off. About half past five a vigorous rifle and grenade fire was directed on the support; and shortly after, a group of Germans came rushing down Hêtres trench on Sergeant Martin's party. The Americans ran forward to meet them and stopped them with grenades; but at this moment a heavy fire opened on them from the right, and Sergeant Martin was twice wounded in the arm. Still holding his men in control, he ordered them to withdraw; and keeping up a steady fire as they retreated step by step, they succeeded in fighting their way back to support without further casualty. Here the wounded sergeant was sent to the rear.

Lieutenant Wallace then brought all three groups back to Mecklembourg to resist the enemy attack that appeared to be developing on the right. After a wait of a few minutes it was decided to make a second move on Hêtres. This time they got only as far as the crest of the

hill, for a German machine gun, well protected by riflemen and grenadiers and masked by smoke grenades, was sweeping the lane of their advance. Then another gun on the right loosed upon them with a deadly crackle, and Private William C. Lindsey of G Company toppled over in an inert heap. It seemed that they were trapped. But the officer answered the gun to his front with a Chauchat, and sent two parties to flank and capture the one on the right.

After firing eight clips the auto-rifle jammed, and a second, rushed into the position, likewise failed them. The Chauchat was a dependable weapon until an emergency arose, and then the chances were that it would break down, so that the men gradually lost confidence in it and came more and more to rely on their Springfields. The patrol on the right was unable to get close enough to dislodge the enemy; and when they had used up all their grenades, they returned to the main group.

Wallace now called by a prearranged signal for a Stokes barrage, meanwhile blazing away at the faltering enemy, who, when the firing of our mortars became too severe, withdrew his guns and permitted the Americans to retire. Just as they reached Soudan the Germans dropped down a box barrage, hoping to cut the patrol off, but it came too late, for at six o'clock they were all safe in our line with the information for which they had set out. A German message picked up a few hours later announced that twenty-one of their men had been killed or wounded in the engagement.

Most of the intercepted German messages reached the 168th by way of a telephonic listening-in post of the French Eighth Army situated between Village Nègre and Chasseurs. Delicate receiving instruments connected by

wire with the main station within our position were concealed in No Man's Land near the German line, and from this many valuable bits of information drifted in to help the Americans counter the German plans. The operator at the Chasseurs station was known as Maurice. He had lived in the United States for a year or so and could speak some English.

The day's work provided many trials for Maurice, and they did not end with darkness. The delicate instruments out in No Man's Land required frequent inspection and adjustment, and the wires — at the mere mention of wires, Maurice would make a gesture of despair. It was irritating enough that the Boche and artillery should cut and smash his wires, but when the gay young *soldats américains* went bravely forth, found his wire, cut it loose, and brought it back all nicely wound up in a big roll, thinking they were stealing a trophy from the Germans — then it was to weep. Many a time he had worked the night through replacing his line.

But Maurice was persistent — persistent even after the First Battalion of the 165th took over the picturesque sector of the Rendezvous des Chasseurs from the French on the last day of May. Maurice had an important station on the hillside opposite, and he told the outpost that they must let him pass to inspect his equipment, but they refused, not exactly understanding what it was all about. So Maurice came around through Village Nègre, dropped into No Man's Land from the lines of the 168th, and worked off to the right to his post.

The fighting Irish of the 165th were distinctly on the alert. Before they had been in possession of their new position a week, they had discovered a suspicious-looking post across on the hillside. From that moment its fate

was sealed. Nothing would satisfy but its destruction. A party was organized — a good strong party — with a detail of pioneers to furnish the petard and plenty of explosive; and one dark night early in June they sallied forth, surrounded the post, closed in on it, pushed the charge right into the heart of it, and blew it all to thunder!

Down in the dugout behind the hill sat Maurice, receivers at his ears, listening to a confused murmur of German voices, on the alert for a significant phrase or a suggestive word. Suddenly he jumped about five feet — a most terrible roar registered for a fraction of a second. Then complete silence.

Maurice knew what had happened. The adventurous and ebullient Americans had blown up the best listening-in post in the corps sector. He dropped the receiver, leaned back in his chair, and passed a weary hand across his forehead. "Four thousand francs, and two weeks toil", he sighed, and then set out to find Major Donovan.

This time he insured his right of passage through the front line of the 165th Infantry by securing from the commanding officer of the C. R. a written pass permitting him to betake himself to the dangers of No Man's Land at any time of the day or night.

"See", cried Maurice gaily, waving the slip of paper in the air, "I no longer fear to go into No Man's Land. I have now a pass — a most excellent pass with the signature of the Major Donovan. If I now meet a German patrol, it cannot touch me. I shall show the pass of the Major, and I shall have an excellent joke on the Boche."

And after two weeks — two weeks of hard work — Maurice had installed and connected up a new outfit, and

again sat down in his little dugout, brushed the dust from the receiver, and listened to the guttural rumblings of German voices over in Hunland.

The Third Battalion was now in line, and Lieutenant Tushek of K Company in command of G. C. 10, taking advantage of a quiet morning, called his men together for some supplementary instruction on the composition and operation of grenades. In order to explain the working parts he picked up a battered and somewhat rusty grenade, which apparently had been lying in the trench since the first battle of the Marne, and removed the detonator. In remarking on its sensitive nature he warned them:

"Never grasp the lower part of the detonator with the fingers, for the body heat is sufficient to explode it. You must exercise great care in handling it."

At that moment the detonator he was holding up for their inspection exploded, tearing off one of his fingers, and wounding him about the face.

"There, you see — *I* wasn't careful", he remarked casually, as he shook the blood from his dripping hand. "I have proved my point."

After a short stay in a very pleasant hospital at Vittel, well fed and surrounded by attractive nurses, Lieutenant Tushek returned to the regiment for more excitement.

Having thus far been unable to take prisoners by attack, the Boche now resorted to ruse. Well knowing that the Americans would not refuse to accept a challenge, he held out a single German as bait, hoping that we would try to capture him and thus walk into a trap carefully set. After months of futile endeavor he succeeded, only because our men were more daring than discreet.

Shortly before eight o'clock on the morning of June 16th Private Joseph J. Cahill of K Company, who was serving on listening post PSB, out of G. C. 9, located a sniper about fifty yards to the front and right of his station. Upon his earnest solicitation Lieutenant Lewis, the officer in command of Cerf, gave permission for three men — Cahill, Corporal Floyd D. Horton, and Private Archie G. Hutchison — to go out to try to capture the Boche or drive him off.

They crawled out over the top and went forward about 100 yards to the timber where they were soon lost to sight. As they advanced the sniper retired, and before they realized it they had been decoyed within range of a group of expectant Germans. A sudden burst of rifle fire rang out, and a few minutes later Horton and Hutchison came flying in to G. C. 8, the nearest post, where they reported to Lieutenant Doocy that Cahill had been shot through the head. They thought him dead, and had dragged his body back fifteen yards to a shell hole where they were compelled to leave him, as a dozen or so of the enemy attempted to surround them.

In order to hold the Germans off, Lieutenant Doocy immediately began shooting rifle grenades in the direction of the body, which was reported to be but a short distance from our lines. As his garrison was small he asked Lieutenant Sefton, in the reserve line at Bizot (P. A. 4), for some additional men to form a patrol to recover the body.

Meanwhile the two K men had made their way back to G. C. 9, and five minutes after Lieutenant Sefton arrived at Soudan with eight men, all "rarin' to go", Lieutenant Cotter and Lieutenant Lewis reported there with fifteen men from K Company and a stretcher. After a hasty

conference the four officers decided to go out at once for the body. They realized that they must act quickly if they hoped to recover it before the Boches carried it in; and they knew that if they waited for orders from higher authority the opportunity would be gone.

It was arranged that Lieutenant Cotter should leave from PSB on Cerf with the fifteen men from K to secure the body, while Lieutenant Sefton was to take ten men from I out from PSK on Soudan to act as a covering party in the woods on the right.

The K Company group moved rapidly to the front and right to the spot where the body had been left, and found that it had already been taken in by the enemy. They were about forty yards in advance of Sefton's group, which was also moving forward and to the right in skirmish formation. At this point Cotter's patrol sighted some of the Boches and opened fire, but knowing it was useless to further expose his men, the officer ordered them back to the line.

At the first shot the I Company men rushed forward, coming under fire when they reached the German trip wire just over the knoll from our lines, and found themselves confronted by fifteen or twenty of the enemy in Mecklembourg trench. Attacking them vigorously with grenades, they drove the Boches back over the top to the second line. But Sefton, as soon as he saw that K had withdrawn and that a heavy fire was now pouring in from his flanks, gave the order to retire.

In the meantime a flank detachment which had been sent out on the left to maintain liaison with the other patrol had got some distance ahead of the rest, and when the fighting started, jumped into the trench and after the enemy. This group consisted of Corporals Harry E.

Chambers and John E. Smith, and Privates Mitchell Houchin, Orrin H. Jones, and Harold G. Lawrence, the latter a member of the Signal Platoon of the Headquarters Company who had been serving in the trenches as lineman and who volunteered to join the I Company patrol.

Sefton, first sending Private James D. Matchett to warn the group in the Mecklembourg trench, remained with one corporal and two privates to cover their withdrawal, but when it was reported that they were angling off to the west, headed for G. C. 8, he withdrew by way of the half-way post between Sénégal and Soudan.

But hour after hour passed, and there was no sign of them. That afternoon and again that night Lieutenant Currie took out a patrol to search for them, but they were already in German hands. For months the regiment knew nothing of their fate, but late in the summer word was received from the Red Cross that Corporal Smith was in a German prison camp, and after the Armistice Private Matchett was seen in France by a member of the regiment. He had lost one leg below the knee. The following February, Corporal Smith rejoined the regiment at Niederbreisig, and Matchett and Lawrence were later interviewed to furnish the complete story.

The three men with Smith (Lawrence was farther away, down the trench) encountered no enemy fire until they turned back. They had gone steadily ahead without realizing the distance between them and the rest of the party, and when it came on them that they were in a dangerous position they decided to withdraw until they could find out where the rest of the patrol was. It was then that the enemy, from concealment, opened up on them. Corporal Smith and Private Jones were together

on the right, and before they had time to drop, machine gun bullets struck the latter in the head, killing him instantly, and the former was shot through the leg. Chambers and Houchin took to cover and then worked over toward Smith to give him what aid they could. Matchett now appeared to find them practically surrounded by a closing ring of the enemy, engaged in a hot fight all of their own, with bullets and grenades arriving from all directions. They could find some protection from the bullets, but as the ring tightened, there was no escape from the grenades, and in a few moments both Chambers and Houchin, still working their rifles, fell, mortally wounded.

The Germans are almost on them and there are but two of them left to fight. Looking wildly about for the loophole of escape they know is not there, they still hope for rescue. Matchett is first hit in the left leg with a bullet, and then a "potato masher" explodes at his feet. He sees a shoe with the foot still in it go flying through the air, and wonders dully whose it is. As he gradually recovers from the shock of the explosion he finds himself at the bottom of the trench and his right leg a mass of bloody shreds. Smith has been wounded again in the hand and neck, and his helmet is crushed by a grenade fragment that tears his scalp. Chambers and Houchin, suffering frightfully, are calling for help. Their cries only make it easier for the enemy, and their two comrades can do nothing for them. Matchett has the presence of mind to apply a tourniquet to his leg, and then slips down into the trench in a faint. In the final rush of the Germans, Smith is hit over the head with the butt of a gun, and when he regains consciousness he is lying in the bottom of a cart, jogging along toward Cirey. At first

the Germans hesitate about bothering with Matchett, as he is so far gone, but later, after what seems an eternity to him, they come for him and take him in.

Meanwhile Lawrence, having taken the wrong turn to an abandoned trench, had walked right into the attackers and was shot in the head and left shoulder. Like Smith, when he came to, two hours later, he was in enemy hands.

Houchin died while the Germans were carrying him back, and Corporal Chambers succumbed the next day in a hospital in Bréménil, and was buried in the cemetery at Cirey next to Lieutenant Schaefer. Cahill, who was thought to have been killed, was only unconscious, and in spite of his ghastly wound, lingered on in a German hospital until the 12th of September.

Smith and Matchett did not see each other again, although they were both in Strasbourg at the same time. Smith met Lawrence at the prison camp at Rastatt several months later.

All three of them were closely questioned by German intelligence officers, but they assumed ignorance or gave erroneous answers when pressed. However, the examining officers seemed to know more about our organization than the prisoners did, stating accurately the dates of our movements from the time the regiment left the States and giving the names of many of the officers.

One of the officers told Smith that they were going to make an attack on the Village Nègre line that night, to which he replied:

"That's good! You will meet our men in No Man's Land. We are coming over ourselves to-night."

If the Germans really had planned an attack, this ingenuous — as they thought — remark may have been the cause of its postponement, for they remained quietly at home.

The three prisoners had a difficult time of it, carted around from place to place — Strasbourg, Darmstadt, Tuchel, and Rastatt — put up on exhibition like show animals, fed only enough to keep them alive, and in the case of Lawrence and Smith receiving little medical attention. These two fared better at Rastatt, for the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. got them new uniforms and provided good things to eat and sports and entertainment. They were released on the 6th of December and returned to France by way of Switzerland. On the 29th of November some Y men brought Matchett back to Nancy from Strasbourg in a car and there he reported to the American forces.

The trench service of the 168th was fast drawing to a close. For some time the rumors of relief had been persistent, and now the first of the officers of the 308th Infantry of the 77th Division, which was scheduled to take our place, arrived to make a reconnaissance of the sector. On the 15th the eight-day tour of the Third Battalion was up, but it was decided to keep it in the line until the regiment moved out.

That evening L Company relieved the First Battalion of the 165th in the P. A. Rendezvous des Chasseurs, already mentioned as a picturesque, heavily-wooded spot adjoining Village Nègre on the right. This position followed the ridge of a steep hill and was an ideal location, not only from the standpoint of beauty, but of defense as well. We now had as neighbors on the right, the French 338th Infantry, the left element of the Eighth Army.

On the night of the 18th Chasseurs received its full share of the bombardment which was general all along

the line, and which extended as far to the rear as Pexonne. Badonviller was becoming accustomed to shelling, for twice in the week preceding it had suffered from violent outbursts of enemy artillery; but for some time Pexonne had been immune. Commencing at seven o'clock in the evening the Boche shelled us unmercifully for two hours and a half, sending over great quantities of mustard gas, and including enough high explosive to do considerable damage.

Badonviller was raked from end to end, but the concentration was greatest at the pottery where several platoons were billeted, and a number of men there and in the town proper were painfully burned. The low places soon filled with gas, both phosgene and mustard, necessitating the wearing of masks for some time. In Pexonne half the population had turned out for a concert, and the Band was in the middle of the *Missouri Waltz* when the bombardment suddenly opened. Here, too, the pottery was the chief target, but for an hour shells of large calibre rained all about the village itself.

A number of men were standing at the entrance to the Machine Gun Company's kitchen in the center of the village, watching the German ammunition burst around the pottery. When the fire suddenly shifted, the first shell landed right outside the kitchen door, killing Private Alonzo F. Baldwin, mortally wounding Cook Miles W. McBeth and Private Hubert Blayney, besides injuring several others. Pale-faced mothers herded their screaming, terrified children into the *abris,* where in their gas masks they crouched with their grandparents, praying that the roaring shells above might spare them and their humble homes.

One of the very few shots that fell in the camp at

Trois Sapins — strays that were probably never intended for this position — struck the kitchen of B Company and wounded three men, one of whom, Private Merton V. Hair, subsequently died.

The Germans had no doubt got wind of the imminence of a divisional relief, for at three o'clock the next morning there was another bombardment of similar intensity, but of shorter duration, on all three sectors. It was calculated to strike when the greatest number of troops would be gathered in the assembling places.

That morning it was learned that the troops in the line were to be relieved at nightfall, not by Americans of the 308th Infantry as had been expected but by the French 265th; soon after, the new officers came up to look over the position they were to take over. The 61st Infantry Division, of which the 265th Regiment was a part, had just arrived from the bitter fighting in the vicinity of Villers-Cotterets, and had been sent to this "quiet" sector to rest up and to act as instructors for the American 77th Division. The New Yorkers were to be gradually introduced to the front as we had been four months — four years, it seemed — earlier.

In order to protect the relief, which was supposed to take place between six and eight that evening, our artillery stormed the Boche line all the way back to Brémenil with everything we had in the way of gas, shrapnel, and high explosive. Their rear area was completely obscured by the immense cloud of smoke and gas that arose from the boiling earth. But in retaliation, the enemy again shelled Pexonne, tearing a great hole in the already damaged parish church and causing numerous casualties among the French soldiers and civilians. A flying piece of shrapnel killed Private

George D. O'Laughlin of A Company; and while carrying his body to the infirmary, Sergeant Ralph H. Denny and Private Donald J. Price were wounded. One of the shells demolished the shed from which the rolling kitchens of the Headquarters Company had just been moved, and another struck a French kitchen which had hardly established itself in the space vacated by A Company's K. P. force, blowing to pieces every one who was in it.

The bombardments of the 18th and 19th resulted in 80 casualties for the 168th — mostly gas burns. Many others who were inconvenienced by slight touches of mustard gas refused to go to the hospital.

During the 110 days that the regiment had been in line in the Baccarat sector, the First Battalion saw trench service for the longest continuous period — twenty-three days — from March 29th to April 21st; the Second Battalion was in line for the greatest number of days, and made five reliefs, one more than the other two battalions; and the Third, besides holding the most extended front, occupied the entire regimental front for the longest single period of any. The men of the Signal Platoon were on duty continuously for the entire period, being among the first in the line and the last relieved; the Pioneers had worked without relief, without having once been back of Pexonne; and the Stokes Mortar and 37mm Platoons had had a steady grind, their men being on duty ten days and off five during the long tour.

The First Battalion, having borne the brunt of both German raids and gas attacks, had suffered over 240 casualties; the Third about 140; and the Second, which by sheer good luck had fallen upon the most peaceful intervals when in line, had lost but 37 men. The Machine Gun Company reported 39 casualties; the Headquarters

Company, 56; the Supply Company, 6; and the Sanitary Detachment, 15. The official casualty reports, as later amended, listed 6 officers and 96 men killed in action, and 21 officers and 405 men wounded, throughout the regiment. May was the month of our greatest losses, and April the smallest.

During this trench period the 168th had suffered more deaths in action, and had lost more in wounded, than any of the other three regiments in the Division. In addition, one officer and seven men had been lost to the enemy, five of that number being either dead or mortally wounded when captured, the other three being wounded beyond the point where they could resist. We, on the other hand, had taken nineteen of the enemy, six of them alive.

The Second Battalion started for the rear on the 18th, and was safely billeted that evening in the village of Ste. Barbe, far beyond the range of the enemy artillery. The First Battalion was able to commence its relief early enough on the 19th to escape the worst of the shelling, but the bombardment caught Battalion Headquarters and A Companies in Pexonne and held them there until half past ten, while the remainder of the outfit, drenched in a pouring rain, waited on the road outside Neufmaisons.

It was long after dark when the relieving French troops, likewise delayed by the bombardment, arrived at the front, and in the midst of a torrential downpour the last of the 168th slowly filed out of the trenches and surrendered command to their Allied brothers. With one lingering look they said good-bye to the Chamois and Village Nègre, now so familiar as the scene of such trials, of such victory. With the inky blackness of the background pierced at intervals by eerie flares, and the snap of machine guns still ringing in their ears, they wearily

trudged along the road to Neufmaisons for the last time. Many a soldier felt a lump in his throat as he passed the dark shadow of the little cemetery in Pexonne where so many comrades, so young in life, so heroic in death, were peacefully sleeping. No fear that they would not be tenderly cared for — the villagers would see to that — and had not the *sergent casernier* written to the Chaplain, "The American is for us French poilus a sacred comrade; his grave that of a brother"? One could not help but think, however, of the time when they were so joyously alive — all of them — when they entered the sector so hopefully, so bravely. Could they foresee what lay before the regiment, these fresh dead? Did their spirits follow as we moved forward to greater sacrifice? Perhaps they stretched out unseen hands to hold back the column slipping by so silently in the night.

The Commander-in-Chief of the A. E. F. stated in his report that the 77th Division had been sent to the line to release veteran troops. Veterans after four months! — with hardly a taste of what was to follow. One bloody day on the Ourcq was to see as many fall as had fallen before in a hundred. But they had passed the test and were graduates of a bitter school. They knew the shrill of an enemy shell, and could tell from its whistle the calibre and its approximate destination; could distinguish at one whiff the composition of a poisonous gas; from the hum of a motor, what type of plane. They feared danger, as they were human, but had learned to conquer their fear. They knew death in its worst form; yet in view of the horrors they were to meet and experience within the month, they were but novices.

The hidden future, however, was not occupying their thoughts as they plodded along. Down the hill the low

houses of Neufmaisons were taking form — Neufmaisons, a good billet and a long sleep! In another day they would be in Baccarat, and then farewell to Lorraine and its kindly people.

XX

FROM LORRAINE TO THE CHAMPAGNE

Out of the line for the first time in three months, the regiment felt strangly out of place; but it did not have long to adjust itself to the almost forgotten condition of security and irresponsibility, for already orders had been issued directing the entire Division to proceed to entraining points farther to the west. It was going to move — that much was certain — but just where, no one in the 168th knew. There were rumors that it was headed for a rest area; that it was going to Paris to take part in the Fourth of July parade; that it was bound for the Somme; and that Château-Thierry, the scene of recent fighting, was to be its goal.

As it turned out none of these conjectures were correct, although a few of the more optimistic clung to the idea of a rest camp until they were rudely disillusioned by the thunder of guns. This state of hectic unenlightenment and speculation was typical of every move the regiment was to make. The men never knew their destination until they arrived, and even then they couldn't be sure.

When the Third Battalion arrived in Baccarat in the afternoon of the 20th of June, and established itself in the *cristallerie,* the rest of the regiment was well on the road to the rear. Because they were fresh from the line, Major Brewer's troops were to be spared a long hike. On the evening of the 21st the entire battalion was jammed into about fifty trucks and jounced nearly to death in an all-night ride which was made longer than

necessary because of the fact that the convoy commander lost the way and made a wide détour. Early in the morning the men climbed stiffly down from their ricocheting equipages into the spick-and-span village of Thaon-les-Vosges. A few hours later the Second Battalion, which en route had spent the two preceding nights at Ste. Barbe, Destord, and Dompierre, marched in briskly, if dustily.

Thaon was an attractive village, but the stay there was short. The men had a fleeting opportunity to rest, sleep a little, and clean up; and to visit the unique Café de la Femme à Barbe, operated and presided over by a genial, bustling, Bearded Lady, who sold more pictures of her hirsute self at fifty centimes each than portions of her weak and far from intoxicating beer.

Then when the trains that were to carry the regiment to a new country were spotted on the quai, all hands were called to load the rolling kitchens, combat wagons, and baggage; and before dark the two battalions were again on the move. The First Battalion, having stopped on the way from Baccarat at St. Maurice, Roville, Villoncourt, and Sercoeur, reached Thaon at midnight and left by train shortly after three in the morning. Through Nancy and Toul, silent and darkened under the constant threat of air raids, the tiny engines chugged and puffed, frequently halting for no apparent reason other than weariness; then past Gondrecourt and Bar-le-Duc. With the coming of daylight, the rambling gait enabled the men to take in at leisure the beautiful country, the limpid, tree-lined canals, the rich fields, and the profusion of roses that encroached even on the right of way. After twelve or fourteen hours in the train the doughboys piled out at Vitry-la-Ville and took to the road for a long, hot march to their stations.

In the regroupment of the Rainbow Division in the area southeast of Châlons-sur-Marne, the 168th was assigned three closely connected villages along the Fion, a small tributary of the Marne. Regimental Headquarters, the Headquarters, Supply, and Machine Gun Companies, and the First Battalion were quartered in St. Amand; the Second Battalion at Coulvagny, practically an extension of the former; and the Third at Aulnay l'Aitre.

They were pleasant, neat little villages with clean streets, white houses, red-tiled and covered with roses; well-kept walks and fine hedges bordering colorful gardens where flowers grew in riot. The sun was fearfully hot, but the feathery trees were green and cool. The quiet beauty of the summer foliage, the rolling country blanketed in rippling fields of wheat picked out in brilliant, flaming poppies; the Fion, splashing and tumbling in its rush to meet the Marne — all of this delighted the eye and soothed the senses — an ideal place for a rest. They were the sort of French rural communities that one visualized before he was disillusioned by the casual filth of Lorraine. But here they were removed from the immediate influences of the war — to be sure it was felt in the homes, for there was no French home into which sorrow had not crept and left its mark, but there were none of the outward physical reminders. It might have been in another world.

Later, when farther down the road of battle, the men of the 168th looked back upon those happy days when they were in the valley of the Marne, and knew that they had never been so happy or in better condition. In these villages they were being exalted by a populace which was gazing on the American soldier for the first time — a populace that was thrilled by the exploits of their latest

Allies in the district of Château-Thierry and the Bois de Belleau — and for them there was nothing too good. It was pleasant to be once more in the comfortable homes of good people, to laugh with the pretty young girls, to play with the children, to enjoy the sunlight, and to sleep the whole night through.

The natives, on their part, marvelled at these happy, care-free boy-men in their exuberant youth and strength; and they took heart, for they were convinced that the cause for which *La Belle France* had been battling for four years was now secure. No one took a deeper interest in the welfare of their guests than the Marquis and Marquise, in whose 17th century château the Headquarters of the Third Battalion was billeted. Madame la Marquise had been born in New Orleans, but had not spoken English for forty years, she said. However, she had no difficulty in making every American with whom she talked feel welcome, and their beautiful *parc* was thrown open for all to wander in at will.

For three whole days the regiment rested; reveille was advanced an hour, and there was no drill, and few formations to stand. While there was an opportunity for play, the men in the different companies organized ball teams, and in the heat and excitement of competition almost forgot the greater struggle that had brought them there. During this period Major Worthington returned to the regiment, re-assuming command of the First Battalion, and Captain Ross, who had commanded it since the latter part of March, was attached to Regimental Headquarters as a member of the Colonel's staff.

On the 27th of June the bugles sounded reveille at five o'clock — the rest period was over, and no one could complain, although many would not have been unwilling

to have it last longer. The new schedule which went into effect that day called for drill from seven until one on heretofore unknown extended order formations. In the morning Colonel Bennett and Lieutenant Colonel Tinley visited the drill field, and told the men of an attack, three days previous, on the 308th Infantry, which had finally taken over our old sector. The Germans had penetrated the lines — almost to Pexonne, it was said — inflicting heavy casualties and taking back with them all the prisoners they could conveniently handle. The recollection of how we had completely repulsed a similar attack at the same point, when we, too, were new to the line, was now doubly reassuring.

On the 28th, after a day's hard work in the broiling sun, the men were looking forward to a sound sleep that would last unbroken until the first call of the bugle. But there was to be no sleep for the regiment that night. Just after dark a dispatch rider from Brigade Headquarters rushed in with the totally unexpected order to move immediately. There was a great scurry and scramble to get equipment, records, and kitchens ready, but at half past nine the first elements moved out.

The hike that followed stands out in memory even more distinctly than the terrible march to Rolampont; one wilted mentally for days after at the mere thought of it. Every one was already tired from the strenuous drilling and the long march to and from the drill fields. On top of that, the men set out loaded down with equipment: filled canteens and cartridge belts; heavy packs; helmets, gas masks, rifles, auto-rifles; and musette bags, which in a few kilometers could increase in weight from fifteen pounds to a ton.

About midnight, before they were too weary to notice

anything but the threading line ahead of them, the column passed an aviation field to which a bombing squadron, having completed the night's work, was returning. The red and green signal lights on the bombers' wings twinkled like colored fire-flies high in the air and flashed their identity to the observers below. Then came the answering signal from the ground, followed by the blinding beam of the searchlight which guided them as they swooped to the landing field.

This was all very interesting, but after the aerodrome was left behind and kilometer after kilometer was passed the strain began to tell. Before the march was finished the limit of endurance had about been reached, each one having thought a thousand times that he surely must drop at the next step. The story of this gruelling experience from the viewpoint of the enlisted men is feelingly told by Sergeant Denny of Company B:

We had expected a march of about twenty kilometres, and braced ourselves for it. But there was no stopping when we reached the town we had thought was our objective. We cursed and went on. Men from another unit in front of us already were falling out along the side of the road. One or two of our new men wavered.

"Pep up, buddy", men around them said, "B Company always finishes a hike."

The stouter men in the company relieved of parts of their equipment men who were suffering too intensely. I believe that every officer in the company by this time had on his back the pack of some utterly exhausted soldier who would not be left behind because "Iowa men always stick".

A full moon was shining now. It was long past midnight. We reached a cross-roads. Rumor came down the line: "It's eighteen kilometers from here". I think every last man gasped.

"It can't be", they told themselves and each other.

"If they can't get you killed at the front, they try to walk you to death", someone wailed.

Eagle-beak Dietz was singing, and that helped. Bill May, a brave, clean, cheery lad, was rendering a bit of mock Grand Opera, and kidding at intervals Smead, a short man ahead of him, whose pack almost brushed the ground. Most of the men had breath for nothing but marching.

We rounded a curve and saw a village in the moonlight. That put new hope in the men. Surely we would billet there. But we did not even stop. We had long since given up hoping for "a nice clean barn with straw in it". We were praying now that we would be halted alongside the road somewhere — anywhere — to bivouac on the spot.

Dawn began to glow. Our stops for rest became more and more frequent, for the officers were well aware of the condition of the troops. At each stop they slumped down in their tracks and dropped to sleep on the road, half of them. We would be aroused when the column started to move again. No one was singing now.

Men fell asleep as they walked, and awoke with a grunt as they lurched against someone. Once a man fell, and four or five more tumbled over him. We were just pushing one foot ahead of the other. After each rest we vowed that somehow we would hold out until the next.

A church spire peeped around a curve up over the trees ahead, and we thought we could make it. It was Courtisols, a village thirty-seven kilometres from the town we had left at nightfall. We plodded around the bend by the River Vesle, and at the edge of town, Lieutenant Bentz, the French liaison officer, threw on us roses that he had picked from the walls of a nearby house. Men were sobbing from sheer exhaustion. It was seven o'clock.

We were guided to our billets — the best we ever occupied — and tumbled on to our bunks and fell to sleep instantly.

This Courtisols, which in broad daylight was sheltering

an entire regiment of sleeping men, is the leanest town in France, if not in the world. It has but one street, and that one seven kilometers long, which follows a narrow oasis watered by the Vesle, here a struggling rivulet only a few kilometers from its source. Hedged in by a boundless unproductive plain, it was a garden spot fringed with patches of ripe rye, billowing wheat, and fields of fragrant new-mown hay and clover.

Again we had come to a village where Americans were unknown. The 168th in its time introduced the American soldier to many little hamlets of France, and it can be justly said that it made a wholesome impression wherever it shared the homes or sheds of French people. They will tell you in Lorraine, especially in Baccarat, that there is no American division like the *Quarante-deuxième.* They felt it was their own, and followed its progress and its triumphs as faithfully as did our own people far off in Iowa. Rimaucourt, Ormancey, Neufmaisons, Pexonne, St. Amand, and now Courtisols — all claimed us.

Just a few minutes' walk from the western edge of the village is the tiny hamlet of l'Epine, famed for the beautiful cathedral that dominates for miles the wide plain. An imposing structure, delicately carved with lace-like decoration, graceful pinnacles, and fantastic gargoyles, it contrasted strangely with the plain little homes — many of them in ruins from the invasion of 1914 — huddled about it. In the first month of the war the Germans had used it as a hospital for their wounded, and some high officer, probably impressed with its majesty and beauty, had ordered it spared. It was constructed in the fifteenth century to replace an earlier edifice built on the spot where, according to legend, a heavenly light disclosed to a shepherd a statue of the

Virgin in a bush. This statue has remained in the church as an object of veneration for over seven hundred years, and Notre-Dame de l'Epine has become a famous pilgrimage church.

Hundreds of the Iowa men in the spare moments of Sunday, or in the afternoon after drill, walked over to view the cathedral at close range — the richly sculptured portals, the choir screen, the jewel-like glass. If they were fortunate they heard, without need of interpreter, the eloquent priest address with emotion his congregation, half American and half French, on the idealism of those who had forsaken their distant homes to stand at the side of France in her travail.

In the interior, under the sixteenth century organ, is a well whose waters are reputed to have a curative effect on bodily ailments. One very hot afternoon "Kokomo" Jones, a K Company cook, and a veteran of the Spanish War, with two or three of the kitchen force strayed into the cool vault of the basilica. Sighting the well and being very thirsty, with no thought of irreverence, they drew a bucket, passed it around, and drank deeply. But the sexton who was coming toward them at the moment nearly collapsed with shock and horror. However, they were physically, and it is to be hoped spiritually, refreshed before he could interfere.

Work was resumed as soon as the regiment had time to recover from the hike. But now instead of merely executing standardized military evolutions it was working with a definite end in view, preparing for its initial offensive action.

The Germans in their final advance in June, 1918, had secured possession of a ridge to the north of the village of Chatillon-sur-Marne, half way between Epernay and

Château-Thierry. This ridge was to them a point of immense strategic importance as it commanded a view of the Marne valley almost to Epernay and exposed every movement of the French on both sides of the river.

In order to deprive the enemy of his observation, and to deepen the terrain between the left of the line and the river, the French Fifth Army Corps, in whose sector it lay, planned an attack to recover it. The Rainbow, which in the turn of the wheel had now become a part of the reserve of the French Grand Headquarters, was chosen to engage in this as its maiden open-warfare fight.

In conjunction with the French 8th and 40th Infantry Divisions, it was to execute the main attack on a front of about two kilometers, its mission being to capture the strongly fortified village of Olizy, a height beyond it, and a wood still farther back, and to organize and hold the territory gained. The terrain was particularly difficult, and the Germans had all the advantage of position and observation. A hard fight was anticipated, not only during the actual assault but following the consolidation of the position when the Boche would undoubtedly try to regain it in violent counter-attacks.

The 84th Brigade was to bear the greater burden of the assault, and the 168th was to play the major part in that. The First Battalion was to make the initial advance, and after attaining its objectives was to be leap-frogged by the second line, consisting of the First Battalion of the Alabama regiment and the combined Second and Third Battalions of the 168th, which was to proceed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Tinley to the final objective.

The infantry was to be transported by camion on the night of July 4-5 to the woods in the vicinity of the line

of departure, and on the following night was to enter the front line trenches.

On Monday, the 1st of July, rehearsals for this operation were commenced, the 168th having for its drill ground a field in contour approximately its battle-field-to-be. The problem was attacked with earnestness and enthusiasm — no matter what the sacrifice, it must be successful — and over and over again the lines went through their maneuvers until there could be no possibility of a misunderstanding. For three days this went on without interruption.

The success of the operation depended largely upon the surprise of its execution and the care with which its preparations were guarded. In order to preserve secrecy, at first even the junior officers were kept in ignorance as to where and when the attack was to take place, although everyone knew that wherever it was it was going to be a stiff fight.

On the afternoon of the 3rd, as the officers were about to go to Châlons to witness a demonstration by the tanks which were to support the assault, word came that the attack had been cancelled. The French had got wind of an imminent thrust against our immediate front, and of the fact that the enemy was massing troops right behind our objective. It was fortunate that this discovery was made in time, for had the attack been pushed the 42nd Division would have been annihilated, so great was the German concentration of infantry and artillery; furthermore, the fact that the assailants would have been packed in the short space between the line and the Marne would have made it all the easier for the enemy.

So this was only an attack that might have been, but the Rainbow was soon to be employed on an equally

important mission. On the evening of the 3rd of July it was transferred from the reserve of the Grand Headquarters to the command of General Gouraud of the French Fourth Army.

XXI

THE BATTLE OF THE CHAMPAGNE

The military situation which confronted the Allies at the close of June, 1918, was far from reassuring. Thanks to the defection of Russia, Germany had been able, early in the year, to concentrate the major portion of her field armies on the Western Front. But the power of America was growing to counter the balance for the Allies, and the Germans realized that to win the war they must deliver the decisive stroke before this power was fully developed. Accordingly, they laid plans for attacks on a scale hitherto unthought of and unattempted.

From March until early June the Allied arms had met with a series of reverses — almost disasters — which reduced their morale to a low ebb. First came the collapse of the British Fifth Army before Amiens, when the English were fighting "with their backs to the wall" and were rescued by the French, thereby narrowly averting a *débâcle*; then the attack on the Lys in April when the French again saved the day; and finally on May 27th, the surprise attack on the Chemin des Dames, which was far more successful than the Germans themselves had anticipated, and which brought them to the Marne from the region of Château-Thierry to Dormans, within striking distance of Paris. It was a black and critical period for the Allies.

The Germans, however, although they had made tremendous strategic gains, had thus far failed to break the Allied line; they had merely bent it, and in so doing had

incurred such enormous losses that even their own docile countrymen were beginning to murmur. The German staff then resolved to stake all on one last supreme effort, the *Friedensturm* — the Peace Offensive — which they promised their people should be the last of the war. The Allied armies were so battered and their morale so low, they said, that they would never survive this last attack, which should surpass in power anything the world had ever seen.

Ever since they had stabilized their lines on the Marne, the enemy had been preparing for this death blow. For some time now it was known to the Allies that another attack on a grand scale was imminent, but so far they had been unable to ascertain the exact sector or front which the Germans had selected for their break-through.

Careful observation of the enemy's movements not only uncovered the concentration which caused the cancellation of the 42nd Division's operation against Olizy, but also indicated an unwarranted activity all along the front of the French Fourth Army, to which it was so unexpectedly transferred.

On the night of the 3rd of July the 168th moved on sudden order to Suippes and the Camp de Nantivet, twenty kilometers by road, almost directly north of Courtisols. It was a miserable night — black as pitch, with a cold, steady drizzle. It was so dark that it was almost impossible to see one's file leader, and the column progressed with accordian-like jerks which added immeasurably to the discomfort of a difficult enough march. The blackness of the night intensified the brilliance of the gun flashes that played like heat lightning along the horizon as the regiment once more neared the front. The respite had been brief.

Daylight had long since overtaken the troops when they arrived at a place where they could throw themselves down to sleep, and there was little inclination to celebrate the National Holiday in any other manner. Suippes, which sheltered all but the Second and Third Battalions, was entirely deserted and largely in ruins. Nantivet was a comfortable camp in the woods a kilometer or so to the east.

General Order No. 47, issued from the Headquarters of the 42nd Division on the 4th of July, explained our mission on this front and fixed the dispositions of our units. On the morning of the 5th, General Menoher was to assume the command of the second position of the sectors Espérance and Souain, the first and intermediate positions of which were held by the French 170th and 13th Infantry Divisions, of the 21st Army Corps. Souain, the right sector, was assigned to the 84th Brigade which was to place five battalions, each with their attached machine gun company, on the second line; and the sixth, the Second Battalion of the 168th, was to be stationed a kilometer to the rear as Brigade reserve.

This order left no doubt in the minds of the Americans that an attack on this front was anticipated, for the mission of the Division as therein set forth was: first, to defend Position 2 at every point and at all costs; and second, to be prepared to deliver counter-attacks to eject the enemy in case he penetrated the ground in front. If the Boche succeeded in forcing the troops back on our position, General Menoher was to take command of the sectors belonging to the 170th and 13th Divisions as well as his own.

Furthermore, all movement by day was prohibited, and camp fires and lights at night were forbidden. The

strictest precautions were to be taken to prevent detection by the enemy of the reënforcement taking place.

On the night of the 4th the regiment moved up to its allotted positions — a short and uneventful hike of not more than five kilometers. The First Battalion took over the C. R. Verdun, on the right, with Companies C and A in the first line, Company D in support, and Company B in reserve. The Third Battalion took over the C. R. Rouen, with three companies in the line, K, M, and L, from left to right, and Company I in support. With these two battalions were the 168th Machine Gun Company and Company D of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion. Company C, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, remained at Camp 3/5, the reserve position, with the Second Battalion. This, too, was the position of Regimental Headquarters, and of the Headquarters Company, although certain sections of the latter organization were serving with the forward units. The 37mm Platoon and two crews of the Stokes Platoon were in line in the rear of the First Battalion, and the Signal Platoon was busily engaged in installing telephones and the T. P. S. service throughout the sector. The Supply Company was stationed in a wood southeast of Suippes, on the Somme-Suippe–St. Remy Road.

To the right of Company A was the 62nd Battalion, Chasseurs Alpins, of the 46th Division of Chasseurs, and Company K connected up on the left with the First Battalion of the Alabama regiment. Ahead of us, guarding the foremost gates of the Châlons, lay units of the French 13th Division.

The five companies constituting the front line of the 168th were stretched along the broken edge of a scrub-pine woods. Their positions commanded an excellent

field of fire, with a broad and uninterrupted view across the gently sloping plain to a ridge seven or eight kilometers distant; between this ridge and the Iowans lay the lines of two armies. Our most advanced positions were approximately three kilometers to the rear of the French first line and less than two from the intermediate position which was to form the actual line of resistance.

Throughout the sector were a number of very deep dugouts, some burrowed as far as sixty feet into the solid chalk, but they were essentially havens of shelter and not living quarters, so practically all of the men pitched their pup tents in among the pines. Wherever a sufficient amount of natural cover was lacking, the tents were carefully camouflaged with branches.

Cutting through our position, half way between the reserve and front line, ran an ancient highway, the Chaussée Romaine — the Old Roman Road, as the Americans knew it — which once was one of the main highways of the early Latin civilization of France. This venerable road was soon to see poured out upon it the blood of a race from a world still unheard of a thousand years after its construction by the slaves of Caesar — the blood of young crusaders who had come forward to uphold the ancient cause of Right on an ancient battle field.

Our new sector lay on the edge of a wide plain, named by the French *La Champagne Pouilleuse* — which may be translated as the Wretched Champagne — a dreary, barren expanse, partly covered with pine woods, the only vegetation that the pervious chalk soil will support. Michelet's description, "a melancholy sea of stubble spreading over a sea of plaster", is fairly accurate. It is the driest region of France, and a distinct change from the verdant, heavily wooded Vosges foot-hills.

As far as the eye could reach the terrain was honeycombed by a labyrinth of trenches hewn from the glaring chalk, and in the perspective it looked like a wrinkled old face. These trenches were, for the most part, the heritage of past struggles — trenches wrested from the Hun. Here and there stood the lonely graves of heroes fallen for *La Patrie* in the battles which had raged back and forth over this land. And over all was the brilliant splash of millions of poppies, blood-red, vivid against the glistening white of the chalk.

The Champagne had been one of the most bitterly contested battle grounds of the war. Here more men had fallen for every kilometer of front than at any other place on the Western Front. The French had on three different occasions attempted to pierce the German line in this vicinity: the first, which failed completely, in February and March of 1915; the second, in September of the same year, when they smashed through for two miles along the entire front of twenty miles, only to be halted in the end; and the last, the ill-fated Nivelle offensive, in April, 1917, which might have been successful had not a legislative delegation, appalled by the frightful casualties, caused it to be stopped.

Thus far, in each of their offensives in 1918, the Germans had overwhelmed every first line defense of the Allies, and there was good reason to believe that this time the actual decision might be made on the Second Position which the 168th was holding. The work of organizing it for defense was commenced without delay: there were trenches to be reconstructed and deepened; dugouts to be completed; wire to be strung; ranges to be figured. For ten days the regiment worked day and night with pick and shovel, hacking at the stubborn chalk, strengthening our line.

This sector, once one of the most active, was now, as far as the enemy was concerned, calmer by far than that just vacated in Lorraine. Only a few discreet high bursts indicated that the Germans possessed any artillery whatsoever, and their planes were keeping out of sight. On the other hand, the French guns raked their line and back areas incessantly. The Boche probably did not want to give away his battery positions, but his restraint must have been trying to his nerves, for he was taking a lot of punishment. Not a night passed but the French made a raid somewhere within our hearing — never giving the enemy a moment's rest.

The concentration of Allied artillery, which was heavy when we arrived, was constantly being increased until the surrounding area was fairly bristling with guns. New positions were constructed, and still they brought them in, battery after battery — pieces of all calibre — and we knew that when the trouble started we needn't worry about our artillery support. "There's a 75 under every bush back there", exclaimed an enthusiastic doughboy. And they were not only back at the reserve positions, but were actually carried beyond our front line, where they could fire point-blank at the advancing enemy, should he break through. Beyond Suippes the French and Americans had brought up great railway cannon which hurled monster projectiles far into the Hun lines.

Our first alert came the very first night we were in position. We rushed to our posts where we waited and waited, while our guns kept up a drum fire until broad daylight. The Boche line grew livid with star shells and signal rockets, but they neither attacked nor replied to the fire. Nearly every night thereafter the regiment was aroused to stand in combat position for the expected assault.

To meet it, General Gouraud, the genius in command of the French Fourth Army whose front extended from Reims on the left to the Forêt d'Argonne on the right, had adopted the method of "elastic defense" which had marked our last days in Badonviller. His plan was to abandon the first line, reserving his chief defensive for the intermediate and second. After the enemy had struck his first and most violent blow upon a position already vacated, and was out of breath, Gouraud would compel him to battle on ground of his own selection.

Now not only were the indications of attack certain, but the front on which it was to be made had been defined — only the exact date was lacking. On the 7th of July General Gouraud issued his famous and stirring Order of the Day to the French and American soldiers of the Fourth Army. (The Rainbow was the only American division serving under him, but there was some American heavy artillery in the sector, and farther to the right, the 369th Negro Infantry). Even now one thrills at the reading of it, and it can be imagined what was the moral effect at the time on soldiers who realized that they were holding in their hands the destiny of nations.

We may be attacked at any moment. You all know that a defensive battle was never engaged under more favorable conditions. We are awake and on our guard. We are powerfully reënforced with infantry and artillery.

You will fight on a terrain which you have transformed by your labor and perseverance into a redoubtable fortress — an invincible fortress if all its entrances are well guarded.

The bombardment will be terrible; you will face it without weakness; the assault will be fierce in clouds of smoke, dust, and gas; but your position and your armament are formidable. In your breasts beat the brave and strong hearts of free men.

None shall glance to the rear; none shall yield a step. Each shall have but one thought; to kill, to kill many, until they shall have had enough.

Therefore, your General says to you: "You will break this assault, and it will be a happy day."

"The assault will be terrible . . . . to kill, to kill many!" What a prospect! The words sent the chills chasing each other up and down the back. But the thought brought one down to earth. In any event, we should meet the enemy in the spirit that this order demanded — without weakening, without glancing to the rear, without yielding a step.

There was sufficient work now to engage the attention of every officer and man in the regiment. Frequent trips to the line kept Colonel Bennett and Lieutenant Colonel Tinley busy. The numerous orders and alerts kept the staff on the jump. The majors were holding daily conferences with their officers; and the platoon commanders with their men. There were supplies to be carried, ammunition to be distributed, routes to be studied. Scout officers made reconnaissances of the advance area and selected their outpost positions. Lieutenants Bentz and Germain had their hands full effecting liaison with the French Army, and Interpreters Auzas, Montmartin, and Rotgé were rushed with translating the orders from the French Staff.

By the 10th of July the date of the attack, through information gained in a raid, was narrowed down to either the 14th or 15th, and it was learned that it would include the front of the Fourth Army as far as Mont Téton on the east. The three succeeding days confirmed this intelligence more exactly.

It was thought that it would surely take place on the

eve of the French national holiday, but the night of the 13-14th of July passed without any aggressive action on the part of the enemy. Bastile Day was declared a holiday for all, and the Americans celebrated with athletic contests. In the afternoon the Chasseurs and the men from Iowa engaged in a spirited game of football back of the trenches, on a field that ten hours later was ploughed deep with enemy high explosive.

That night the long series of raids on the part of the French to determine the date set for the attack culminated in the acquisition of the precise information. A small party of five — Lieutenant Balestier, Sergeant Lejeune, Corporals Hoquet and Gourmelon, and Private Aumasson — in a daring rush into the enemy trenches, made a wonderful haul, for the prisoners they brought back with them stated that it was merely a question of hours. The German bombardment was to begin at ten minutes past midnight, and at a quarter past four in the morning the infantry would leave their trenches under the cover of a creeping barrage.

As fast as wires would carry it, the word went to every unit in the army. A hurried telephone message from the Headquarters of the 84th Brigade, finished off with a short "Good Luck", announced to the 168th the imminence of the attack. There was no time to be lost. The battalion commanders were notified instantly, and fleet runners bore the message to the forward elements that could not be reached by wire.

A heaviness of air, an enormity of silence, which would have betrayed to the skilled observer the prelude to a storm, hung suspended for a moment over all like something of actual substance, and seemed to grip in its hush the whole world. But not for long. At ten minutes to

midnight every gun in the Fourth Army leapt to life with a frightful roar. It seemed as though they had all fired at the same instant, and in a second the sky was lit by flashes and bursting shells. Gouraud had given the order for the artillery counter-preparation that was to forestall the German attack. Rockets from the enemy line spun upwards, vari-colored, with their messages of distress. Our batteries were hurling their weights of steel and explosive at the Boche on areas where his troops were concentrated. They swept back and forth over the crowded trenches, making a shambles of the lines from which the enemy planned to rush.

The reports from the nearer batteries were deafening, but it was still possible to distinguish the unbroken rumble of the heavier pieces to the rear, and the shriek and the moan of the big shells as they plunged over in an endless stream. The rush of air almost swept one along, as a struggling swimmer is swept by a treacherous undertow. But this, which seemed so powerful, so stupendous, was completely dwarfed by the fury of the German bombardment twenty minutes later. One never conceived of such a thunder of sound. It was paralyzing, crushing. To the men of the Rainbow, this became the basis for comparison with every subsequent bombardment; and nothing, not even the deluge of fire at St. Mihiel, ever approximated it.

The troops had previously received orders, in case the bombardment came back as far as our position, to make for the dugouts in an orderly manner. Guards were assigned to block the roads and to close the wire gates, and many of these paid for their devotion to duty with their lives. The first shower drenched certain sections with gas, so that the men, impeded by their masks and

the darkness, had great difficulty in getting quickly under cover, and a number were struck by shells.

Lieutenant Carlyle B. Wurster and the Second Platoon of Company C were in the line of outposts in the C. R. Verdun. From their position, which was exposed to the enemy's fire, and in which they suffered heavily, they could see the French batteries in front of them at work. As they watched, fascinated, horrified, two of the 75's with their courageous crews were blown out of their emplacements by direct hits.

Company D, the support company of the First Battalion, had no dugouts, but was stationed in open trenches in the vicinity of the Old Roman Road. The fire here was so severe that time after time men had to be dug out of the trench where they had been completely covered. Inexplicably, but three of them were killed and only nine wounded.

The dugouts in the secondary positions were also insufficient, and part of Major Stanley's men were forced to take to the open trenches. As in the grasp of a great hurricane that tears and pulls, the trees above them were being twisted and battered. Men were torn and blown to atoms before the eyes of their comrades. White chalk was spurting up in cloudy geysers. A platoon of E Company was severely hit when the barrage swept over its trench. Lieutenant Doolittle and forty per cent of his men were struck in ten minutes time, and it was a miracle that any of them escaped.

Those who had found shelter in the dugouts were suffering too. Large as these shelters were, the soldiers were crowded in them so closely that they could hardly turn around, and to think of sitting down or resting was out of the question. In a short time the air became so

foul that the candles went out, and a match would flicker only for a moment. Men were placed on the steps to fan the air down, but that did not relieve the situation. In order to avoid suffocation in one of them where a number had already fainted, the occupants were ordered to move in a circle, going out one entrance and in another. This was kept up for hours, and every now and then someone was struck; but it was better than letting the whole company die for lack of oxygen. It was particularly distressing for the wounded who could not move, and who lay along the galleries, gasping for fresh air. Deep down in the dugouts one could feel the quake of the shells, as if a giant were pounding with a thousand-ton sledge and with the rapidity of machine gun fire.

They were long anxious hours before the German barrage ceased to sweep over the trench lines and ravaged woods. The battalion commanders were having a trying experience in getting information from their companies, and relaying it back to Regimental Headquarters. All the wires so carefully strung went down the first minute, and the T. P. S. was useless in such a storm. The signal men performed prodigies of work in their futile efforts to maintain the communications. Sometimes the line would go out in the middle of a word, and a man would vanish without order to repair it so that the sentence might be finished. One base line was spliced no less than forty-three times during the bombardment, but to no avail.

The matter resolved itself into the use of runners, and this was not the most satisfactory of means on shell-swept roads and in caving trenches. But in spite of the peril, these brave messengers persisted — and some of them got through.

Billy Schupp and Fred Boysen started from Lieutenant Lainson's P. C. with a message for Major Brewer giving the details of L Company's situation. When they had got out about a hundred yards, Schupp turned and said something to Boysen, who was five feet behind, but the roar was so great that he was not heard. A few steps further, and a German shell burst in the boyau. When Boysen came to, he was lying crosswise in the trench with the mangled body of Schupp on top of him. He lifted him off and turned him over once or twice to make sure that he was not alive, and then, reaching in the breast pocket of his comrade, took out the message and started ahead. He knew that he himself had been hit in the leg, but was still too dazed from the explosion to realize how badly; and somehow he managed to stumble along until another runner overtook him and helped him to Battalion Headquarters. There he delivered his message and told of the fate of Schupp. Then he started to pull himself up the steep flight of steps.

"Where are you going", he was asked.

"Why, to get my buddy, of course", he replied. But his weakened body could carry him no farther, and he sank at the feet of the men who would have restrained him.

The runners were not alone in the open. The stretcher-bearers, volunteers for the most part, were searching for wounded men in the woods and in the crumbling trenches. In the midst of the Hell and destruction, never stopping to dodge, no matter how close the shell, they carried their burdens to shelter or to the aid stations. Many were felled, but there were always others ready to fill the gaps and to carry on with the same rare courage. In the heavily shelled Company K sector, four were killed by

one shell, only the wounded man they were shouldering escaping death. It was men like these, exposed to all the dangers of the battle and expecting none of its rewards, who merit the greatest measure of praise.

The Third Battalion's area was the most heavily shelled of all, because it was practically surrounded by a ring of furiously cracking field pieces which the Boche was trying to silence with an avalanche of explosive. Lieutenant Ihrie of the Battalion Headquarters was wounded at the very start, and Lieutenant Thompson of I Company was struck soon after. Later in the morning Lieutenant Doocy of M Company was hit, and then word came back to Major Brewer that Lieutenant Currie, also of M, had been wounded in the arm but was sticking to his post.

It was a night of narrow escapes, and any man who went through the open trenches or woods was taking his life in his hands. While he was endeavoring to move some of his wounded, Lieutenant Mahlon D. Wallace of L Company had his clothes riddled by flying fragments, but was untouched himself, although the man he had just placed on the stretcher was killed and the one who was assisting him was wounded.

Lieutenant Heath E. Noble of Company I, while the shells were crashing through the woods of C. R. Rouen, heard that some of his men were lying out in the open, and without the slightest hesitation plunged out into the maelstrom and brought them in from under the hail of certain death.

The work of the artillery stands out brilliantly in this engagement. It was the artillery that spared the infantry along the second position the necessity of defending their line against the gray-green hordes. Back of the Iowans

were several batteries from the 151st Field Artillery, the same regiment of Minnesotans that had supported them in Lorraine. Stripped to the waist, the gunners awaited the order to fire, and when the command came they sprang to their guns like magic. These muscular figures in their scant raiment, as they fed charges with rhythmic motion into their 75's on the recoil, seemed to be part of a smoothly oiled machine, and their guns shot back and forth like terrible pistons. Every gun of the Division had its special mission which it was not to abandon for any reason, except that in case the Boche broke through and the pieces were in imminent danger of capture the battery commanders were authorized to burst them. There were no provisions for a withdrawal.

The French artillery was living — and dying — up to its name. At the hoarse command of *"Attention"*, the *poilus* blasted their batteries into action. They were hurling their shells into the enemy, unmindful of those falling about them. The men in the horizon blue, with bared throats and grimy faces, had but one thought, "to kill"— and to block the road to defeat. One by one, four pieces of 105's within a stone's throw of K Company were smashed into uselessness, and the battery commander, whose legs were blown off at the knee, and who was carried into the aid station smiling, was replaced by a corporal. As long as there was a muzzle left, there were enough men to serve it.

In front of L Company, out in the open, a battery of Frenchmen fed their guns and sang *La Madelon*. *"Pour le repos"*— crash! —*"le plaisir"*— slam! —*"du militaire"*— Bang! It was unbelievable. Men singing under the threat of death! It was unreal, fantastic. Perhaps they sensed the fact that their country was

saved. But the Germans spotted them, and in the midst of a phrase, a whirring shell wiped them all, gun and crew, from the face of the earth.

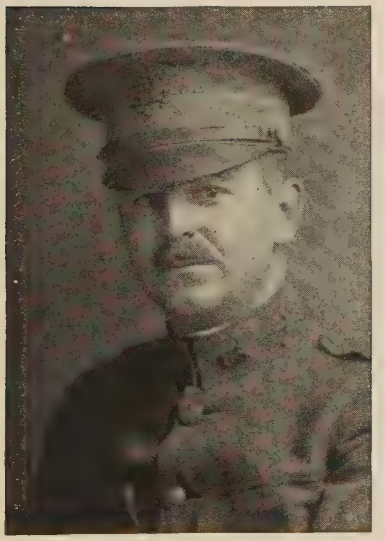
During the first hours of the bombardment the regimental and battalion dressing stations were unable to handle the flow of wounded. Although these stations were crowded far beyond capacity, the stretcher-bearers were bringing more in every minute. It made one wonder how much longer the regiment would last under such punishment, what kind of line would be left to check the Boche if he broke through the intermediate position. Sergeants Kenney, Van Epps, and Fox of the Sanitary Department, blood-soaked from their patients' wounds, worked their skilled fingers at top speed. Captain Bunch had all his men at their task, and he himself was laboring indefatigably. Lieutenant Williams voluntarily left his dugout, and for more than two hours, all the time under violent shell fire, cared for the men who were lying out in the open, stopping only when wounded himself. Lieutenant Van Meter was rendering his usual splendid service, and Lieutenant Green, not long with the regiment, was proving himself a worthy member of it.

Chaplain Robb was helping to bind wounds, cheer the suffering, and comfort the dying. He draws a picture of the scene at the regimental post:

> Our own little aid station, under command of Captain Bunch and Lieutenant Van Meter, had from fifty to a hundred wounded and dying men lying under the open sky with no shelter of any kind. A battery of the 151st Field Artillery across the road was firing as rapidly as it could. Its smoking guns were barking viciously at the approaching enemy, while a deluge of shells burst about it. Light had just begun to dawn in the east as a boy was brought in and laid down by the side of the path.

MAJOR HENRY E. BUNCH

MAJOR WILBUR S. CONKLING



MAJOR ORVILLE B. YATES

LIEUTENANT LEON BENTZ

CAMOUFLAGE DETAIL AT WORK ON PEXONNE--BADONVILLER ROAD

CHOW DETAIL LEAVING BADONVILLER FOR FRONT LINES.
THE BEGINNING OF THE CARRIERE COMMUNICATING TRENCH

Lieutenant Van Meter came to me and said, "Better speak to that lad, Chaplain, he can't last more than a few minutes".

I went over and knelt down by his side. A shell had blown his foot away at the ankle. A slug had torn through the left leg above the knee, and he had wrapped a wire about it, twisting in a stick to stop the flow of blood. His left arm was shattered and hanging loosely at his side. He lay there so still and white, with never a cry coming from his lips.

"How are you coming, old chap?" I said. Between his clenched teeth he answered, "All right, I guess. I guess I'll make it." [The look in the chaplain's face told him that there was no hope.]

"Am I going to die, Chaplain?" he questioned.

"Yes, my lad, you've not long." Then I asked him if there was anything I could do for him.

"Yes", he said, "Will you write my mother all about it?" I said I would, and he seemed content. He requested me to pay a few francs to a comrade of his, and then I asked, "Isn't there anything else, lad, that you want to say for yourself before you go?"

"I guess not", he returned, "but have you a cigarette?"

I gave him one and lighted it, and he lay there smoking, drawing the smoke into the lungs, and blowing it out through his nose. He seemed to take great comfort in it. He looked up at me, blew out a puff, and smiled so coolly up into my face. I turned away to hide my tears, and busied myself with some others. After a few moments, I came back. The cigarette was still burning between his fingers, but he was lying there, his pale, boyish face so set, cold in death. Without a cry of pain, without a sob of fear, his life had flickered out.

About daybreak word came that the Boche had passed the intermediate line and was rapidly approaching our position. That the information later turned out to be false did not affect the apparent gravity of the situation, or the exaltation of spirit, almost enthusiasm, that steeled

the men for the impending death struggle. Immediately they were rushed to the combat positions. It was a relief to quit the dugouts, although it meant exposure to the frightful storm and many casualties. In the A Company sector one shell hit squarely in the trench, burying five men, of whom three died. The other two narrowly escaped suffocation before being dug out by their comrades. All along the exposed front of the First and Third Battalions the enemy continued to send his shells, placing them with diabolical accuracy. But those who survived never doubted for an instant what they should do. They understood the order of Gouraud. The charge to hold to the last had been literally obeyed by Privates Henningson and Carpenter of Company C. After the bombardment had practically subsided, they were found in what had once been a trench, buried up to their arm pits, and grasping tightly their rifles which they had managed to hold on to. They were ready to follow the order.

It was after dawn. Ambulances were now coming up and the wounded were being evacuated. The news flashed down the line that the front was held. But the bombardment did not entirely cease. There was only a lull in the violent storm which had raged from midnight. Shells continued to fall on our positions, and swarms of enemy airplanes flew over our trenches, swooping down close to the ground, and peppering our men with machine gun bullets. There was no protection in the open trenches and we had to take what they gave us. We battled them as best we could with rifles, but they were not very effective against the darting, speeding machines that maneuvered with marvelous agility and grace, like a flight of fleet swallows. They went around in groups of

six, except for one large scarlet-nosed group of forty or more, said to be the famous von Richthofen Circus, which caused the greatest consternation among us. The yellow-bellied fusilage of Loeser's squadron, another of the most daring of the enemy groups, was altogether too prominent. It was terrifying, though fascinating, to see these planes dive in and out, but the sprays of bullets were deadly, and one felt so utterly helpless when attacked from the air. After the first experience the men tried to scoop out holes underneath the forward bank of the trenches to escape it, but it took time, as the chalk might as well have been granite. The French aviators were courageous enough — the 168th this day had many proofs of that — but they were so few, and were fighting against certain destruction. Time after time lone French planes attacked superior numbers of enemy machines, and after a few brave spurts, a few thrilling maneuvers, they were almost certain to burst into flames, or with broken wings or disabled steering gear to whirl rapidly downward for a distance and then fall like a plummet to death. How often the heart sought one's mouth during these unequal contests.

But what had taken place two kilometers ahead of us to stay the Hun? History had been made that morning along the narrow strip that stood between the enemy and victory. The Germans had staked all on this last throw; their success or failure meant the winning or losing of the war, and they had met with the severest defeat that either side had suffered on the Western Front in three years. But how? First, according to Ludendorff, the Allied bombardment, which had caught them so entirely by surprise, created more destruction among the soldiers massed for the assault than in any other engagement of

the war. Two divisions were so badly cut up by our furious barrage that they had to be replaced before the jump-off. Then Hindenburg himself admits that Gouraud's masterly strategy had been too much for him, and that his most effective artillery preparation had been practically without result — a futile pounding of empty trenches.

At a quarter past four in the morning, streaming rockets from the front announced that the moment for the decision had arrived. Would the dikes hold against the hitherto undeniable waves? That inspired artist, Gustave Babin, tells us the story:

In the advance line, exposed to the preparatory bombardments, to the hot deluge of minenwerfer, were left only slight forces, small groups of lost children, under the command of resolute, indefatigable officers, charged first and above all with warning the rear of the precise moment when the assault waves should be thrown forward. The men to whom these posts were confided were sacrificed beforehand, and they knew it. It remained for them to die a glorious death. It shall be seen that they did not fail at any point. The blazing trail of rockets shooting to the early morning sky did not call for help. They signalled to their brothers, to their avengers, the danger: "Here comes the enemy".

Behind this advance line, separated from it by an open space, was another line on the undulating plain. It was this line that was to break, if not to stop, the German wave. Its redoubts, protected by barbed wire, solidly built, were like the pebbles of the strand, around which breaks the foaming, mounting tide. Cut at first, and it was cut two or three times in places, it accomplished its rôle in retarding the forward march of the enemy. It stopped him for three hours — three hours of bloody hecatombs for him. It was the cause of his disaster. The victory was decided there, on that line of redoubts of the advance elements, in front, even, of the real line of defense.

The struggle was eventually carried to the intermediate position, but in spite of the still powerful momentum and desperately repeated assaults the Boche broke through in but one place on our front. A prompt and crushing counter-attack delivered by two companies of French infantry and two companies from Alabama sealed the breach. The 167th, in its bloody hand-to-hand fighting, captured twenty-five prisoners and a number of machine guns. Fifty Germans lay dead in the trenches of one strong point which fell before their onslaught. The 166th Infantry, which had one battalion on the intermediate position, successfully repulsed seven distinct attacks before noon. To the right, the village of Perthes was taken by the enemy, but was recaptured by the French. An isolated detachment of the French 43rd Division was reported by our flying observers to be holding out, and still fighting as late as the afternoon of the following day. Everywhere on the front of the Fourth Army the check was complete. To his soldiers Gouraud said: "It is a hard blow for the enemy. It is a beautiful day for France."

The Germans had attacked on a front of eighty kilometers from Château-Thierry to the Argonne. The armies of Generals von Mudra and von Einem had attempted to pierce the front of the Fourth Army from Reims to the Main de Massiges, while another army aimed to break the front of General Berthelot's Fifth Army between the Marne and Reims. Here the enemy met with some few temporary successes, crossing the river on a narrow front northeast of Château-Thierry, and pushing certain small elements a distance of eight kilometers beyond.

On the front of the 21st Army Corps the enemy

employed in the first day's attack six first class divisions: the Guard Cavalry Division, the Second Bavarian Division, the 88th Division, the First Division, the First Bavarian Division, and the Seventh Division. The first three of these had been relieved of fronts in this sector only two weeks previous and were thoroughly familiar with the terrain. The 226th, 30th, and 7th Reserve Divisions, which were holding the line prior to the attack, remained in place and permitted the six fresh divisions to pass through them.

One division attacked on the front of the French 170th Division, to our left; three on the front of the 13th, directly ahead of us; and two on the front of the 43rd Division on the right. The Germans were holding their 20th Division in reserve north of Souain.

Their plan was to effect a crossing of the Marne east of Château-Thierry with von Boehn's Seventh Army, which was then to advance on both sides of the river in the direction of Epernay, while the First and Third Armies, commanded by von Mudra and von Einem, attacked from the east of Reims. The right wing of these two armies was to be brought past the Forêt de la Montagne de Reims to Epernay, with Châlons-sur-Marne as the principal objective. Reims was not to be taken by direct assault, but was to be surrounded by the double enveloping movement. Had the enemy captured Châlons, it would have imperiled the safety of the communications between the French armies of the east and north, and would have permitted him to exploit his success in the direction of Paris. Aside from any military considerations, the loss of Reims, Epernay, and Châlons would have been a distinct blow to the morale of the French.

A map found on a prisoner showed that the Germans

had expected to reach Suippes at noon on the 15th, and Châlons at four o'clock on the morning of the 16th. The Kaiser, observing the action from Ludendorff's headquarters on Blanc Mont, was waiting for the moment to make his grand entry into Châlons, as four years before he had triumphantly entered Nancy. Instead, he saw his troops crucified on the intermediate position, with miles of fortified country and a mighty human bulwark between them and the coveted objective. It was the *Friedensturm* only for the thousands of dead that strewed the plains of Champagne in the fruitless sacrifice for the Fatherland.

From nine o'clock on, the bombardment of the 168th's sector dwindled, until by noon it had ceased entirely. By this time the French knew that the victory was theirs, and the German General Headquarters had given orders for the suspension of the offensive. Now the men could safely look about them and see what the artillery had done to our position. Tents were riddled with shrapnel, and equipment was scattered everywhere; vehicles were overturned, and beneath them were pinned man and beast; trees were torn, and their tattered branches strewn about the surface of a shell-furrowed earth. Camp 3/5 was practically demolished; buildings were wrecked, and the fragments of their structure intermingled with the dead. The nearby picket lines of the Supply and Machine Gun Companies and of the artillery were dreadful sights. The carnage of animals was frightful. During the bombardment these helpless, maddened beasts had dashed wildly back and forth through the trees, or neighed and screamed in agony as they rolled and kicked convulsively on the ground. And no one could help them in any way. Altogether nearly three hundred horses and mules perished in this vicinity.

The tired doughboys moved gingerly around the wreckage, stretching their cramped limbs and relaxing themselves in the warm sunshine. Over the mad ruin flew swift German planes, diligently trying to ascertain the damage done behind the Allied lines, swooping down to earth now and then whenever they spied a target for their machine guns.

In anticipation of further attacks, additional reënforcement from the Rainbow was sent to the intermediate line during the afternoon, three battalions — the Second Battalion of the 165th, the Third Battalion of the 166th, and the Second Battalion of the 167th — having already been there at the time of the initial assault. A half battalion of the 168th was now assigned by the commanding general of the French 13th Division to the French 21st Infantry to be employed wherever necessary on the front line.

About one o'clock in the afternoon E and F Companies were ordered to roll packs. They knew without being told that they were to go forward. They assembled their equipment in perfect order and awaited the command to fall in. Two hours later they were formed up in the pines near Major Stanley's P. C., and the long march started. "Take plenty of interval, but watch your file leader", were the instructions from the head of the column. The thin line of troops headed up the narrow gauge railway for a short distance, and then turned into the boyau between the First Battalion and the Chasseurs. It was sunny and clear, and back of the Boche lines ten or twelve observation balloons were carefully scrutinizing our position, while the air was swarming with planes.

It was not long before the German artillery was registering hits along the line of the march. A large shell

would burst up on the parapet, and then men would drop to the bottom of the trench, leaping up and running to close up the interval after it had spent its force. But not all the shells burst beyond them; for a kilometer the Boche guns followed them, and when at six o'clock they reached their destination in the Bois de Spandau, nearly four kilometers ahead of Camp 3/5, there were many gaps in their ranks.

The line was in bad condition from the morning's barrage, and the Iowans were soon busy digging in, for they had no dugouts or other protection from the shelling. Their positions overlooked a perfectly level field into the woods which had marked the farthest advance of the Germans ten hours before. They had not even reached the Second Position here. Dozens of the enemy dead were plainly visible, and in the very front line was a lone 75 which had stopped and demolished the tanks that were standing guard over the dead bodies of the infantry.

During the afternoon of the 15th the bombardment was generally resumed, but not with the intensity of the morning's fire; and again the enemy attempted some futile, disjointed assaults to improve his position. Throughout the night the artillery duel continued, but the infantry remained at a standstill.

The 62nd Battalion of Chasseurs, which had been our neighbor for ten days, was now relieved by the Second Battalion of the 117th Engineers, reënforced by Company C of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, and their sector, the C. R. Craonne, was included in that of the 168th Infantry.

At nine o'clock in the evening of the 15th the First Battalion and the Machine Gun Company were ordered to be ready to move on a moment's notice. They were to

be relieved by Algerians of the French Tenth Regiment, and were to be withdrawn to Camp 3/5 as Corps reserve. After waiting the night through, they were finally relieved at seven o'clock the next morning. Most of the trenches and dugouts were occupied by other troops when the First Battalion reached its new position. They had no more than arrived when the Boche began to shell the whole area. Those who could find no better shelter scattered out in the fields to the rear where they spent most of the day dodging the whizzing 88's and digging holes for their own protection. Company A, strung out in a wheat field where the enemy's planes could not locate them, watched unharmed the camp going to pieces under the German fire. About eleven o'clock that night they moved to a large dugout about a half kilometer to the left, while the other three companies were sent back to the Camp de Nantivet. Major Brewer's battalion, however, continued to the Rouen sector, harassed by airplanes by day and exposed day and night to artillery fire.

The day of the 17th was relatively quiet, although the enemy maintained a punishing fire at intervals along our entire front. The most unpleasant thing with which the troops who remained in position had to contend was the nauseating odor that was being gently wafted in their direction from the three hundred or so dead horses.

The First Battalion again changed station that night. After twenty-four hours of comparative peace, it was ordered to take over the C. R.'s Verdun and Craonne. The relief was completed early in the morning of the 18th in a heavy rain — A and C and the Machine Gun Companies in Verdun, and B and D in Craonne. Here they remained until the regimental relief.

The casualties for these few days had been severe, considering the fact that we engaged in no infantry fighting. Except for the small proportion caused by airplanes and gas, they were all due to shell fire, and most of the wounds were of a serious nature. A smaller percentage of the wounded from this engagement were returned for active duty than from any other battle in which the 168th took part. The total casualties for the regiment were 76 killed or died of wounds, and 237 wounded. Being longest exposed, the Third Battalion topped the list with 28 killed and 91 wounded, but the Second Battalion followed closely with 33 dead and 71 wounded. Company E had the greatest losses of any — 15 killed and 37 wounded. This company lost its 1st Sergeant, Harry Kendall, who was killed during the bombardment on the morning of the 15th. The First Battalion lost 13 killed and 50 wounded, one-third of them from Company A. The Headquarters Company and Machine Gun Company lost in wounded respectively 14 and 7 men; and the Supply Company, 2 killed and 1 wounded, and fifty per cent of its animals destroyed. The property loss included several rolling kitchens and water carts.

During the attack various points as far as twenty kilometers from the front were bombarded by the enemy. Lieutenant Veasey of F Company and Lieutenant Hunting of D, who were temporarily detached from their organizations and serving as Zone Majors, one at Vadenay and the other at Suippes, were both mortally wounded by shells from guns eight or ten miles away. An especially designed long range gun, throwing a 380mm projectile, fired on Châlons intermittently throughout the 15th and 16th, adding considerably to the extensive damage caused by aerial bombardment.

Many of the wounded, too, realized that the war did not end at the front. The hospital at Bussy-le-Château, eight kilometers behind Suippes, although plainly marked by a large red cross of brick dust on a white chalk background, was the especial target of enemy long range guns; and another hospital at Ecury-sur-Coole which sheltered many of the Rainbow's wounded was bombed and machine-gunned by Boche aviators. At the former, men about to undergo operations for wounds received a few hours previous in the lines were killed in bed; and several who had already been operated upon, but who had not yet come from under the influence of the anesthetic, were wounded anew. Lieutenant Thompson of I Company, suffering from abdominal wounds, went through two harrowing experiences: one when he was lying helpless in a French hospital in Châlons while it was being shelled; and again after he had been removed to the tent hospital at Ecury during a raid by enemy airplanes, in which nine patients in the shock ward were struck. Private Loren E. Ellis of G Company, badly wounded in the arm and hand, was resting comfortably in a nice clean white bed. "I had not been in the hospital very long", he wrote back to his company, "until over came two German airplanes. The next thing I knew, there was a big hole in my side, and I was lying outside the ward door." That their attacks on the hospitals were deliberate and intentional can not be questioned, for they were all marked with emblems, clearly distinguishable from the air, and at night these red crosses were illuminated to more definitely indicate their nature.

During the afternoon and night of the 15th, and as often afterward as was necessary, Chaplain Robb, assisted by details from the Pioneers and the Band, directed

the burial of our dead. He chose as a cemetery a little knoll about a kilometer behind our line. Trusting to the humanity of the Germans, he thought the place would be spared if he raised a Red Cross flag; but it was under heavy shelling that 58 of our comrades were laid to rest. Every now and then the burying details had to get down into the open graves with the dead to escape the shells.

During a quiet hour in the night of the 17th a wide trench was dug not far from the German line. A group of F Company men leaned over the new-made grave and placed in it the bodies of four of their friends. Before the earth was filled in, 1st Sergeant Orville C. Winter delivered a short address in which he spoke touchingly of the splendid sacrifice of the dead. Could he foresee that within two weeks he, too, was to make the same rich sacrifice?

The regimental dispositions remained unchanged throughout the 18th; E and F Companies on the intermediate line with the French 21st Regiment, the First Battalion in C. R.'s Craonne and Verdun, the Third in C. R. Rouen, and the rest at Camp 3/5. Late in the day news came through the French of a successful Allied push in the vicinity of Soissons; our troops had broken through on a wide front and the Boches were retreating. Glorious news to add to the victory of the 15th. It was a time of real joy; the *poilus* did not attempt to restrain themselves. *"On les aura"*, they cried to the Americans, as they brought out their *vin rouge, "le Kaiser est fini."*

At half past eleven that night Colonel Bennett received orders to withdraw the regiment at once. This relief came as a great surprise, especially to E and F Companies who were to furnish parties for a raid to be made at daybreak in conjunction with the Chasseurs. All

preparations had been made, and they were anxiously looking forward to the attack; so the order cancelling it came when it was least expected. The regiment was to march to the Camp de la Noblette, about ten kilometers behind Suippes, with the latter place as the assembling point.

It was a black night, and it had been raining shortly before, so it took some time to round up all the men and to get the equipment together. As all portions of the road to Suippes were subject to artillery fire, it was necessary to clear it before dawn, for discovery would have meant heavy casualties.

The foul scent of unburied animals permeated the atmosphere and sickened the men as they waited for the units to assemble. Our batteries were at work — that was comforting. But standing on the road waiting to move — that was what racked one's nerves, for there was not a man but knew what would happen if daylight caught them on the road.

Shortly after midnight Major Stanley moved out with Companies G and H and the Headquarters Company. The First Battalion left about half past one, and the Third a half hour later. Meanwhile the captains of E and F were spending anxious moments trying to get their men back without loss. The Machine Gun Company was sadly hampered by its lack of animals and its withdrawal was greatly delayed by difficulties of transportation. Colonel Bennett and Lieutenant Colonel Tinley were the last to leave — except for the unfortunate details who stayed behind to police the area and to collect the ammunition. The Supply Company, which was already back beyond Somme-Suippe, had an easy time of it.

As the last elements pulled out of Camp 3/5 the

artillery preparation for the morning attack commenced. There were bursts on every side, and the sky became red with shells, and both sky and ground illuminated by distant flares and the nearer flashes of hundreds of batteries. The 168th was thankful that it was leaving all this behind.

Those who made the march from the trenches of the Champagne to Suippes will swear that never before or since have troops made better marching time. "You mean the time we ran to Suippes", they say when referring to it. In the pitch darkness the men stumbled over the water-filled shell holes. But it was necessary to push on and on, to get as far away as possible from the front before it got light. They needed no urging, however, for they were anxious to put the greatest possible distance between themselves and the trenches in the shortest possible time.

Fortunately every one reached Suippes in time. After a short rest, just after the sun was breaking over the horizon, the first units moved out. Once beyond the town, it was only a matter of marching, and the normal pace was set. It was evident that the 168th was not the only outfit leaving the sector. Artillery, light and heavy, ammunition and supply trains, and columns of French crowded the roads. It looked as if the whole show troupe were moving to another stand.

During this part of the hike the men were conscious of a protector, a lone airplane at a great height, following the column. It saw the First and Second Battalions safely into camp; but just as the Third was approaching, an enemy machine eluded it and was preparing to swoop down on them. Just then the Allied plane above, piloted by an intrepid Frenchman, Lieutenant Vamier, spotted

the Fokker and immediately engaged it. The German shot up into the high air with Vamier close after him, and for several minutes the 168th saw one of the prettiest fights ever staged, both pilots maneuvering at tremendous speed, dipping, circling, rushing at each other, their machine guns sputtering away. But the Frenchman was the better man, and getting in behind the Teuton, riddled him and almost tore the rudder from his machine. The vanquished plane started fluttering to earth, with the conqueror circling above like a hawk over its quarry. The Boche, however, handled his crippled machine with skill and brought it to a safe landing. Then Vamier, good sport that he was, came alongside and shook hands with his adversary and congratulated him on his good fortune.

At that time our men, who thought that they were more fatigued and worn than troops had ever been before, who had just made a strength-sapping march fresh from the battle field where they had withstood one of the fiercest assaults of the war, ran to the falling machine, eager for — a souvenir!

There were barracks at the Camp de la Noblette, real shelter. And this was welcomed. It was nearing noon when the last men were quartered, but any time of day or night would have meant bed time to the Iowa regiment on this 19th day of July — to all but the kitchen force. The cooks and K. P.'s did not rest, for they were busy preparing the first good meal the men had had since the evening of the 14th. Had it not been for the stir about the kitchens and fragrant odors emanating therefrom, one would have thought the camp deserted.

This camp was situated about 15 kilometers northeast of Châlons, almost on the spot where in the year 451 the

au brave 168e d'infanterie en souvenir de
la victoire du 15 juillet 1918

TYPICAL CHAMPAGNE COUNTRY

SLAUGHTER OF HORSES BY GERMAN BOMBARDMENT IN THE SECTOR OF THE 168TH, JULY 15, 1918

Hun captain, Attila, met defeat at the hands of Aetius. The little stream from which the camp took its name was soon filled with officers and men, taking advantage of the opportunity to bathe in the clear warm water and rid themselves of cooties.

On the 20th, permission was granted to the officers and a small percentage of the men to visit Châlons-sur-Marne. It was a real privilege, for it was the only town of any size that they had seen, except from a distance, since their arrival in France. And it was only proper that a city which they had defended at the cost of so many of their comrades should be opened up to them. There was much to see, although little to buy, for Châlons had been subjected to almost nightly air raids and for two days to the bombardment of long range guns. But the people were gay — even those whose homes had been wrecked — for they knew their city was safe from German occupation.

Châlons had probably never before seen so many Americans; the hotels were filled with men of the Rainbow. The dining rooms were closed unusually early — as, of course, no lights were permitted after dark. At this time the regiment possessed but one officer of Jewish extraction, Lieutenant Solomon Rubel of G Company and New York. Sol, as he was known to his friends, included in his make-up a considerable amount of Irish blarney with a dash of Latin suavity which often opened doors that were closed to other people. He was very much disappointed to find himself too late for dinner that evening, but seeking out the good landlord of the particular restaurant which he chose to patronize, much to the amusement of the bystanders, he told how he fought the battle of the Champagne, how he had con-

quered and checked the enemy, and that as soon as he was sure that the city of Châlons had been spared to France, he had surrendered his command to the French and rushed to this place "for the very purpose of eating one of the delightful meals for which your hostelry is so famous". Others wondered how Sol did it, but not he. He was served in state by the host himself with the best of fare, with a bottle of good wine thrown in, while his envious brother officers looked on from the outside in unutterable envy.

That afternoon the field officers of the Division were assembled at Cuperly. General Gouraud, the "Lion of the Argonne", the commander of the Fourth Army, was to address them and thank them for their services in the past battle. Lean, erect, military, with one arm gone, one hip shattered, and five wound stripes on his sleeve, as he stood there before the Americans that warm summer's day they knew they were looking on a soldier such as the world has seldom seen. The youngest general in the French army in 1914, he had risen rapidly to command one of its field armies, not only by his bravery which had exposed him time and again to danger and had won him medals and wound stripes, but by his sagacity, mental alertness, and brilliant strategy. Very simply he thanked them and then explained to them his defense of the sector which they had just quitted, and the forces with which he reckoned. "The deeds of the Rainbow Division were as beautiful as its name", declared the General after the war. "You have a right to be proud, for you fought in that great battle, perhaps the most decisive of all the battles of the war."

On the same day another group went in the opposite direction on an entirely different mission. Some three

hundred men of the regiment, with picks and shovels, were loaded on trucks, and taken back to Camp 3/5. One can imagine the rapture with which the news was received that they were to bury the three hundred horses which had been dead for five days. It was about as unpleasant a detail as was ever assigned men of the 168th. The work of digging into the unyielding chalk was difficult enough — TNT might have made it easier — and to make the bloated bodies smaller to fit the holes gouged out, someone would fire into them with an automatic. Then with the not altogether unjustified alarm of "Gas!" everyone would adjust his mask, and keep it on for the rest of the procedure. Some German planes nosed over when the detail first arrived, but they flew quickly away, and it was generally thought that the stench had driven them off.

Orders came late the afternoon of the 21st to move immediately after nightfall. The destination of the three battalions was Courtisols, from which they were to leave for an entraining point. To the regiment, then, entrainment spelled rest — that was the only interpretation the men thought to put on it. After being in the line almost continuously since February, it was surely time for a recess. But before the departure a contingent of replacements, sent to fill the ranks so recently thinned, was reported to Regimental Headquarters. There were a few — pessimists, we thought them — who attached a sinister significance to the arrival of the refills. To them it meant another engagement directly ahead.

At 9:30 the column started to move out on the glistening white road that appeared ever so much whiter under a clear sky and a brilliant moon. It was a beautiful night for a march, and a wonderful night for bombing. Those

who have never marched with a column pursued by enemy bombers with the express purpose of dropping a few tons of high explosive in its neighborhood have missed one of life's greatest thrills. It was a thrill that was not denied the 168th on the night of July 21st.

When well on the way, crashes and bursting lights to the southwest told the men that the avions had found Châlons and were bombing unmercifully. The anti-aircraft batteries were putting up a stiff barrage, their shells bursting red high in the air with a dull r-r-rump. Streams of tracer bullets and signals crossed the sky. As a display on the flat plain it was unequalled; and it was all far away. The troops trudged on.

The regiment was marching in four groups: the Headquarters and Supply Companies, which, with Regimental Headquarters, were headed for Sarry, south of Châlons, near the Marne; and the First, Second, and Third Battalions, in that order, making for Courtisols. Just as they were nearing the village of St. Etienne-au-Temple, where they turned off the main Châlons road, a stray bomber spied the column. Down he came roaring on the Third Battalion as if he were going to charge it head-on. Crash! Crash! Crash! The sharp, ear-splitting cracks as he dropped three bombs in rapid succession raised those nearest off their feet. The men without order were off the road in an instant and scattered out in the fields. He was evidently trying to destroy the bridge and the troops on it, but his aim was shameful, and all three bombs fell into the stream. However, it was as close as any one cared to have them.

The First and Second Battalions, warned by the explosions, were moved off the road into the wheat fields, but not before the bomber had fired several hundred

rounds at them from his machine gun. There were, fortunately, no casualties. Another plane, coming from the direction of Châlons, attempted to blow up an ammunition dump to the left of the road, and then swung around and started west along the side road on which the Headquarters and Supply Companies were marching, dropped two bombs near them, and flying low, turned his machine gun on the wagon train. There was a stampede of terrified animals, which was as largely responsible for scattering the column as the plane itself, and after the Boche had left there was great difficulty in reassembling it. A combat wagon, minus its guiding hand, went careening up the road at express speed, and the driver had to walk almost to Châlons to recover it. Just before the First Battalion arrived in Courtisols several bombs were dropped, sending the terror-stricken villagers to the fields until the danger was past.

An arbitrary divisional billeting officer chose to assign the Second Battalion to the quarters formerly occupied by the Third. He argued that as the men all came from the same State, while there might be some little difference in the size of the battalions and their marching order, such trifles should make no difference among friends. Accordingly, the Second Battalion, preceding the Third, was quartered nearest l'Epine, and the Third was sent five or six kilometers to the other end of town to occupy Major Stanley's old billets.

As usual, once they were settled, sleep was the main thing which concerned both officers and men. And after they awoke a good meal was the principal consideration. The people of Courtisols, friendly before, when they learned that the Rainbow had taken part in the battle which had barred the passage of the Hun to Châlons

and their homes, could not find sufficient means to express their gratitude and their happiness in having us once more among them.

In the afternoon the First Battalion marched through Châlons to Coolus where it entrained for an unknown destination. Several hours later the Second Battalion followed, and early in the morning, the Third. As the latter passed through the city it witnessed a strange procession — the townspeople returning home after spending the night in the wine cellars in the cliffs several kilometers out, or in the open fields where they thought they would be safe from German bombs. It was a motley crowd — practically the entire population — sleepy-eyed, dishevelled, with their most precious possessions and the necessary bedding piled into baby carts, hand-drawn wagons, and any other contrivance that could be used for the purpose. But withal they were cheerful and waved gaily at the passing soldiers.

Another to-be-remembered group was three young American women of the Red Cross who braved the dangers of the night to remain at their station in the city, and to whom the regiment was supremely grateful for the hot chocolate and delicious sandwiches which they generously put before it.

The matter of entraining at Coolus, three or four kilometers below Châlons, was simple. There was no quai for loading, but there was plenty of room, and willing hands soon had all the transportation aboard. On the bluff above the station were machine guns, mounted for use against airplanes, and manned by Frenchmen. They acted as guardians during the last hours that the Americans were in the Champagne. But no airplane came near to set them in action.

Other units of the Division, which had preceded us, had notified the people along the route of the movement of Americans, and at every village and station through which the trains passed there were demonstrative crowds on hand to wish us *Bonne Chance.* As we neared Paris the crowds increased and jammed the overhead bridges, cheering and waving French and American flags. They seemed to know better than we our destination. *"Château-Thierry, n'est-ce pas?"*, they shouted. The men laughed, and replied in their choicest French phrases — it was great sport laughing and joking with these jovial people. But we were going to a rest area, and who wouldn't feel happy?

Americans then were tremendously popular in France; mothers brought their little children and held them high so that they could see these men of the West, and *Oo la la!* the pretty mademoiselles threw them many kisses. There was some disappointment because of the fact that when the trains came close enough to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower, they turned off in the other direction. Many would have preferred a better opportunity to see the world's most beautiful and, in time of peace, gayest city.

But the regiment rushed by without even stopping and a few hours later reached its detraining points farther up the Marne. At la Ferté-sous-Jouarre and at Trilport the various organizations left the trains and commenced hiking to the villages which had been assigned them. That evening the First Battalion, Regimental Headquarters, the Headquarters, Supply, and Machine Gun Companies were comfortably settled in Armentières, and the Second Battalion at Changis. Because of delay in entrainment and the long march, the Third Battalion did

not reach Jaignes until the day of the 24th was well advanced.

These three villages were situated along the river, from ten to fifteen miles southwest of Château-Thierry. The regiment was in the valley of the Marne, that country so suggestive of the fierce struggle at the beginning of the war. And it was here the news was broken that the Rainbow was soon again to go into action.

Notwithstanding the present calm and repose of the lovely countryside, there was a presentiment that the fighting in which the 168th was about to engage would be much worse than anything it had yet seen. The 42nd Division had been transferred from the French Fourth Army and put at the disposal of General Pétain, the French Commander-in-Chief. Although several days rest in the new area had been anticipated, plans were that minute being made for the rapid transit of the regiment to the front north of Château-Thierry.

XXII

FROM THE MARNE TO THE BATTLE LINE

The month of July saw a complete reversal of the military situation in France. The brilliant defense along the line from Château-Thierry to the Argonne, which shattered the greatest effort that the Germans had yet made, or were to make — for from that moment the initiative was lost to them forever — enabled Marshal Foch to concentrate his steadily increasing reserve force for a smashing surprise blow against the enemy at his most vulnerable spot.

In the early morning of July 18th the Allies attacked the entire western face of the Marne salient — that salient which the armies of the Crown Prince had won at so bitter a cost but six weeks previous. Three American organizations played an important part in this initial action. South of the Aisne the First and Second Divisions, with the famous Moroccan Division between them, overwhelmed the opposing troops by the power and unexpectedness of their onslaught. Farther to the south the 26th Division, debouching from the vicinity of Belleau Wood, carried before it in magnificent style the villages of Torcy, Belleau, and Givry. Thus began the series of Allied victories which finally brought the arrogant foe to his knees.

In the beginning of the month the Germans seemed to have won, and announced that the end of the war was at hand; the last of the month saw them in full retreat on a wide front and admitting a defeat which every day

became more and more serious for them. The troops who had threatened the most vital points of the Allies were themselves now in grave danger.

It was to assume no mean rôle in this decisive struggle that the Rainbow Division was so suddenly withdrawn from the Champagne front. It was because of its splendid offensive spirit that on July 29th M. André Tardieu, High Commissioner of the French Republic to Washington, speaking in Paris, was able to say to his hosts: "Today on the Ourcq, an American Division has beaten the Fourth Division of the Prussian Guard."

The newspapers said that all America was thrilled by the announcement, and that the enthusiasm was doubled when it was learned that it was the Rainbow Division that had vanquished the flower of the German army. In a sentence, this historic remark describes the climax of a fortnight of fighting. But it does not tell the story of a relentless advance against the bitterest of defenses: only the imagination could have allowed one to know of the cost, of the sacrifice, and of the privation.

The order sending the 168th back to the battle line reached Colonel Bennett in the late afternoon of the 24th of July. Before he had time to transmit it to the battalion commanders, Major Kistler, from Division Headquarters, was consulting with them as to the amount of transportation required. "You probably will take up the fight in the morning. The 26th Division is exhausted. They have fought magnificently", Major Kistler said as he completed the transmission of the first verbal orders. It was evident that he was in a great hurry, but he took time to indicate that staff officers sometimes possess very human and very American traits. His parting remark was, "Tell one of your men to get me a pair of Boche field glasses."

Preparations for the move started at once; extra bandoliers of ammunition were issued, reserve supplies of hardtack and "corned Willy" were stacked to await the arrival of the trucks that were to carry the regiment forward, rifles and bayonets were inspected, and canteens carefully filled.

It was a blow to all to have the bubble of *permissions* so quickly burst, but the decision of the higher authorities was accepted with fair grace — albeit with some grumbling. Some even looked forward to the novelty of motor transportation, for as yet they had not come to view a camion with suspicion. Later they knew that camions meant but one thing — the urgent need for a pinch hitter.

After dark, a long, sinuous line of covered trucks drew up in a cloud of dust at the three stations of the regiment. Solemn, rotund, heavily-bundled, impassive Buddhas peered out from the driver's seat of each vehicle. With one accord, and without any apparent provocation, they dismounted, jabbering, gesticulating. This was our introduction to France's yellow-skinned colonial troops, the Annamese.

After loading the extra supplies of ammunition and food, and the machine guns and their ammunition, and cramming between twenty and thirty men into each camion, the regiment was soon ready to move, and by midnight the last of the 168th had set out on their most fateful journey — that is, all except the Band and the Supply Company, which were to start overland that night with the regimental combat wagons and supply trains.

It was soon discovered that motor transportation in the army does not come under the head of "luxury". The space not occupied by solid Iowa flesh was quickly

filled with the heavy fumes from the exhaust and the thick dust of the road. Careening around corners like crazy ships, bouncing along an uneven track, stopping with neck-snapping abruptness, and resuming the mad race with equal unexpectedness, the Annamite drivers urged their machines on through the night as if conscious of the new force and energy which they were conveying to the crucial point on the battle front. For a while the vocal artists and punsters competed with the droning of the engines; but one by one, lulled by the rhythmic jar of the road, the men dropped off to sleep, and soon nothing could be heard but the steady pound of the motor — not even the dull, portentous rumbling that increased in volume as they sped on in the darkness.

Shortly after dawn the head of the train bumped around the corner of the main street of a battered village and halted. Stiff, and sleepy-eyed, the men piled out to view an extraordinary sight — the village of Epieds, from which the enemy had been driven but the day before. Scarred and crumbled walls, from which thin wisps of smoke still issued, spoke eloquently of the conflict. An abandoned German howitzer, a most satisfactory proof of the hasty departure of the Boche, lay overturned by the roadside; and the mounds of ammunition, scores of clumsy helmets, and every manner of enemy equipment that was strewn about the streets admitted further that he had not retreated in the best of order. Shells were dropping in a field a few hundred yards away; above, a group of airplanes, surrounded by fluffy bursts of shrapnel, were darting at each other; and to the front, smoke and shots of flame from exploding shells completed a picture that for fantastic unreality rivalled the most vivid chromo of Civil War time.

A few kilometers ahead, in the Forêt de Fère, the lines were deadlocked. The Yankee Division, during days of bitter fighting, had forced the enemy out of Epieds and Trugny into the dense woods where they were holding when the Rainbow came up to relieve them. Their losses had been enormous, and they were at the end of their endurance.

Orders to proceed to a position in the forest came from Brigade Headquarters which, along with the first aid station that was already caring for patients, had been established in the village. As the column started out it came upon a battery of French 75's, also preparing to go into action.

"Are you going forward this morning?", an English-speaking artilleryman asked an Iowa doughboy.

"Yes", came the reply, "and if you'll just pick up your little ol' soixante-quinze and hitch on, we'll try to get you to Berlin before night."

"But surely you don't expect to get that far?", returned the serious-minded *poilu*.

A bit reluctantly, the American conceded: "Well, there is some talk of stopping at the Rhine, but I dunno, I dunno about that. These fellers are Hell when they get started."

But if there were any illusions as to the nature of the task that was in store for the regiment, all that was necessary to dispel them was a glance at the fields round about. Shell holes, twisted rifles, crusted bayonets, machine guns with half-emptied cartridge belts, and Germans — dead Germans — beside them, littered the trampled wheat. And every few yards, in the open stretch or before the hedges that had screened an enemy nest, were crumpled khaki forms pitched on their faces,

their hands gripping rifle stocks in the vise of death. This was the sight that greeted the men of the 168th as they moved forward to battle. In making a relief there is nothing so destructive to morale as to come upon the bodies of dead comrades: it makes one think; and thinking is bad, even for soldiers who have schooled themselves to look upon death as the common fate of all.

By noon the regiment was under the cover of trees in the Bois de Fary, and orders were given to dig in, as the increasing action of the nearby friendly artillery was likely at any moment to bring down upon it a hostile bombardment. Even then shells were breaking within danger distance. Between intermittent showers, enemy aircraft hovered low, seeking alike for battery and infantry positions, thus making it doubly necessary for all to keep out of sight and under cover.

Orders from the First Army Corps directed the Rainbow Division to extend its front to include that of the French 167th Division in addition to that of the American 26th Division, as the contraction of the salient had resulted in the gradual narrowing of the Corps front. And on the 25th the 84th Brigade took over the entire front of the 26th Division, which had been reënforced by the 56th Brigade of the 28th National Guard Division from Pennsylvania, the artillery of the former remaining to support the Iowa and Alabama regiments. During the night of the 26-27th the 83rd Brigade relieved the French 167th Division, thus giving the 42nd the entire front of the American First Corps; and from this time on until the Vesle was reached, the Corps had but one division in the line.

Soon after the regiment was in place Colonel Bennett, Lieutenant Colonel Tinley, and Major Stanley visited Colonel Parker, commander of the 102nd Infantry, at his

P. C. in the woods just south of the Etang de la Logette, and made arrangements with him for the relief which was scheduled to take place that evening. He told of the wonderful work of his organization and of the pitiful condition in which it then was. His entire regiment numbered less than one of the relieving battalions, and because of this woeful lack of man power he was unable to hold his line as he would have wished. Nor was there any well-defined idea as to where the enemy was holding or what was his strength.

Colonel Bennett directed the First Battalion to take over the front line, which was then occupied by the 102nd Infantry, scattered elements of Colonel Logan's 101st Infantry, and a battalion of the 112th Infantry. Major Stanley's battalion was designated as the support, and Major Brewer's, which was already in the proper position directly in front of the ruins of the Maison Boutache where the regimental P. C. had been established, as reserve.

Guides, supposedly familiar with the terrain, led Major Worthington's forces forward to the relief of the firing line. Soon after dismissing them the Major sensed a mistake, and informed Colonel Bennett that the line was so indefinite that he was unable to gain liaison with flanking troops.

In the meantime Major Stanley moved his battalion in half-platoon groups to the relief of the support. As it was then dark, he ordered his men to take over the positions of the 102nd and hold them until he could make a reconnaissance and effect such changes as he might deem necessary.

This was hardly completed when Colonel Bennett was notified by the Brigade Commander, General Brown, that the troops which the First Battalion had relieved had

wandered entirely outside of the 26th Division's sector, and that those in the actual sector assigned to us were straggling back without waiting for relief. This mix-up created a serious gap between the front of the 167th and 168th, and Colonel Bennett was directed to place a battalion in the breach. If he found it impossible to shift the First Battalion, he was to send Major Brewer up to occupy the position.

This was a difficult situation for troops on new ground. To begin with, it was so dark that one could scarcely see his hand before his face — even in the daytime it was hard enough to maintain liaison in the dense and tangled brush. To increase the difficulty, the Boche had unlatched a punishing fire of large calibre pieces over the entire area. Of course it was out of the question to move the First Battalion in the circumstances, and it would have been equally confusing to attempt to send up the Third. The matter was settled by covering the gap with outposts from the Second Battalion, and just before dawn E and F Companies moved to the positions indicated by the order.

Throughout the night the enemy continued to rake the woods with shrapnel and high explosive. The roaring guns, the flashing bursts, the frequent gas alarms, intermittent showers, a chilling wind, and lack of shelter combined to make it a night of pure misery. Every battalion was suffering from the bombardment. The Machine Gun Company and Company C of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion, which was attached to the Second Battalion, both had their losses. One shell of large calibre found a portion of Company K, striking a tree in their midst as they lay huddled on the ground, killing six and wounding a like number. Never was daybreak more anxiously awaited.

XXIII

THE BATTLE AT LA CROIX ROUGE FARM

The day of the 26th of July is one that is written red on the records of the regiment. All who welcomed the dawn were not present that night when taps were sounded by the whistling shrapnel on the bloody field that stretched before La Croix Rouge Farm. Those who survived recall it as a ghastly, hideous experience. In Lorraine the 168th had endured the rigors of trench warfare, the horrors of raids and gas attacks; in the Champagne it had submitted to a devastating artillery action; but now it was to learn, in its first offensive action, what it meant to face the relentless fire of machine guns in prepared positions.

It was a cloudy, heavy day, unfavorable for aerial observation, but the Boche maintained a violent fire on localities where he suspected the assemblage of Allied troops. There were huge stores of ammunition in the Château-Thierry pocket which the enemy could not remove in time, so he threw in our direction all of it that his guns would take. The First Battalion suffered from this largess, more from wracked nerves than from actual loss, although the casualties were not insignificant.

The Second Battalion was now holding the regimental front, the position to which the guides should have directed the First Battalion the evening before. Major Stanley had placed E and F Companies in the line, keeping G and H, and Company C, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, 800 yards in the rear. To the right he was in

liaison with the French 156th Infantry, 39th Division, a unit of the 38th Corps, and to the left, loosely, with the 409th Infantry of the French 167th Division, still operating as a part of the American First Army Corps.

Shortly before noon the First Battalion moved from the position where it had been shelled so heavily, and took up the line vacated by the Second. The regiment was now facing in a northeasterly direction, with its line of assault a few hundred yards south of the opening in the woods which directly faced the Croix Rouge Farm.

In the meantime, the Third Battalion of the 167th had come up on the left, partly filling up the hiatus between the 168th and the 409th. At that our lines were widely extended, and Captain Casey notified Major Stanley that it was impossible for him to cover all the front assigned his company and still leave anything in support. There was nothing to do but direct him to thin his lines and to await such arrangements as the Major could make.

The men of the regiment knew that an attack was impending, but they were going about their various tasks with the resolute calmness that was to support them in the trying days to follow. It was not until one o'clock, however, that Major Stanley received the first message with regard to the assault.

"Get in contact with the enemy, if you have not already done so", it stated. "The line will advance at 2 p. m. If you receive no further orders, advance at that hour. Your first objective is road from La Croix Rouge Farm, running southeast, paralleling your front (La Croix Rouge–le Charmel road). Next objective is the village of Fresnes, if possible to take without serious resistance. Be sure to mark your line with panels. More details will follow if obtainable. Bennett."

This was the sum total of the information given the battalion commander — this, and a map with the battalion sector roughly outlined upon it. Colonel Bennett had forwarded all the information that he himself had received. As to the strength of the enemy, his location, the kind of weapons at his disposal, there was not a word. That was left for the infantry to discover.

Major Stanley saw at once that it would be impossible to get his troops to the jump-off position by the time set, and he did not yet have sufficient ammunition. In addition, he had learned that the French on his right did not intend to attack until 4:50. As soon as the Colonel was acquainted with the situation he cancelled the order for the two o'clock advance.

In the meantime the officers of the Second Battalion were reconnoitering the new position, and the troops were moving forward in thin lines. Shortly before three o'clock Major Smith, commanding the Third Battalion of the 167th, wrote to Major Stanley:

> There is a big gap between my right company and your left. Will you not have an officer meet an officer from Company M of my battalion, so that they can arrange a mixed post and establish liaison?

This latter was a problem to be solved by Lieutenant Thrasher and Captain Norris. To them it occasioned little difficulty — as difficulties were reckoned in this war. It only meant the thinning of already thinned lines.

While this matter was being adjusted, a second message directing an attack reached Second Battalion Headquarters. At half past two Colonel Bennett had sent out from his P. C. at the Maison Boutache, the following:

> Artillery preparation begins at 2:50 this afternoon. Attack

starts at 4:50 p. m. Supplies will come up if we can get them up. Ambulances have been provided. Ration carts will soon be up.

Since leaving the stations on the Marne the regiment had been subsisting on reserve rations, and they were about exhausted. The wagon train, accompanied by the Supply Company and the Band, had set out soon after the departure of the truck convoy, and they were battling with roads turned into morasses from constant rains, wrecked by shell fire, and jammed with troops, artillery, ambulances, and trucks. But finally the kitchens had reached Epieds, and as soon as a meal could be prepared, the ration carts were sent forward into the Forêt de Fère with a supply of hot food. Unfortunately, few had the opportunity to sample it, for the battle was in progress before they arrived at a point where it could be distributed.

The Second Battalion was now disposed for the attack. The jump-off was prepared near the edge of the woods, E Company on the right and F on the left, each with two platoons in the first line, and two in support. In similar order H and G were stationed 600 yards to the rear. As the ground over which it had to advance was thick with underbrush, and as there were no trails over which the guns could be moved, the Major directed the captain of Company C, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, instead of waiting until after the troops had stepped off, to place his pieces up on the front line where he could deliver fire to support the attack.

At a quarter after three Captains Casey and Yates returned to the battalion P. C. for final instructions, the latter reporting that he had just been informed by the French on the right flank that they were going to advance

to the road running southeast from the Farm and then make a turning movement to the left. Captain Yates told them that his orders were to advance straight past the Croix Rouge Farm and into the woods beyond. This, they replied, was impossible; they understood that the Americans were not to advance until later.

Here was a situation brimming with all the potentialities of a glorious jumble. If the French proceeded with their contemplated move, and the Americans followed their instructions, the Boches could sit back and rest while the two Allies finished each other off with their cross fire. It sent Major Stanley post-haste to the P. C. of the adjoining French battalion. There he met the commander, who confirmed the statement; the French were to make a turning movement pivoting on the point where the road from the Farm entered the woods. This would bring them facing west, enfilading our advance.

A message stating this fact, and inquiring if there were not a mistake in our orders, was hastily dispatched to Regimental Headquarters. As the two regiments were operating in different corps, it would have been impossible to adjust the matter by recourse to the higher authorities, so it was arranged between Major Stanley and the French major that in case the turning movement was a success the Americans would halt on the first objective, the Croix Rouge–Le Charmel road. So the attack was again delayed.

These postponements were heartbreaking, for ever since half past two, when the Allied artillery opened up, the unprotected troops had been harried by an invisible enemy. It was raining, and the dripping green woods were heavy with the smoke of bursting shells and the mist of toxic gases. Great shells were snapping full grown

trees like match wood, and ploughing up the damp, fragrant earth. Threatened not alone by steel and gas, but by falling limbs and flying splinters as well, the men of the Second Battalion prayed for the signal that was to send them into action. Every moment their casualties were increasing, and they were accomplishing nothing. Twice they had been keyed up for the attack, and twice they had been let down. And now, if there was to be any attack at all on the afternoon of the 26th, there was no time to be lost.

At twelve minutes after five Captain Ross, the Regimental Operations Officer, arrived breathless at the P. C. of Major Stanley. With him he had the order which was finally to control the action, the first phase of the drive that was to occupy the 42nd Division until the 3rd of August. The Captain, with Colonel Bennett, was back at Brigade Headquarters at the south end of Courpoil, a little village on the Epieds–Beuvardes road, at half past four when Field Orders No. 11, 84th Brigade, were issued. He had made superhuman efforts to get it to Major Stanley before the hour of the attack, although it was too late then under the best of conditions to get it to the line in time. But thick mud, slippery paths, and bursting shells, all held him back, and it was over twenty minutes past the time for the jump-off when he arrived.

This order, signed by General Brown, read:

The enemy is offering resistance in the VENTE JEAN GUILLAUME along the defile of LE CHARMEL, and along the general line defined by the road running north and south through La CROIX ROUGE and included in this Brigade sector. The 39th Division on our right will attack at 4:50 P. M. and occupy the eastern edges of VENTE JEAN GUILLAUME and HILL ARBRE de la FOSSE.

The 167th Division on our left will maintain liaison with this Brigade in its progression.

The 84th Brigade will attack at 4:50 P. M.

Zone of action: 84th Infantry Brigade, Northern boundary: Northwest corner of BOIS de BEUVARDES — La CROIX BLANCHE Fme.— Ru de la CROIX BLANCHE, inclusive. Southern Boundary: FARY Fme.— Road bend 800 metres southeast of La CROIX ROUGE Fme.— northeastern edge of Wood VENTE JEAN GUILLAUME, and Ru de la GOULEE.

Objective: Northern and eastern edge of La VENTELETTE Wood, and so much of the continuation of this line as is included in the Brigade sector.

Rate of advance: The attacking troops will leave their positions of departure at 4:50 P. M. and will move at a single bound — speed 100 metres in three minutes to the final objective.

This order also gave information of the artillery support. The 101st Field Artillery was to back up the 167th Infantry; the 102nd, the 168th; and the 103rd Heavy Field Artillery was to second the attack of the Brigade as a whole. Liaison centers and the signals to be employed were indicated, although the 168th was unequipped with rocket or any other kind of signal. The southern limit of Alabama was to include the Croix Rouge Farm to the northwest corner of La Ventelette.

At the same time another order came directly from Regimental Headquarters directing an immediate advance and calling special attention to the turning movement after reaching the Croix Rouge–Le Charmel road.

Major Stanley rapidly read off the order to the four company commanders who were assembled at the P. C., and all started at once for their positions. The Major himself, with his headquarters group, moved forward. During this time the enemy artillery was paying particular attention to that portion of the woods next to the

clearing for a depth of three hundred yards; and in the advance of not more than five hundred yards, the Major lost his adjutant, Lieutenant Peckham, and the majority of his runners. He reached the edge of the woods about a minute before the assaulting troops went over.

To properly understand their problem, it is necessary to appreciate the nature of the terrain over which they were to operate. Before them, in the center of a rectangular clearing four-fifths of a kilometer in width and twice as long, with a narrow vent leading northward, stood a grim cluster of low stone buildings known as the Croix Rouge Farm. Rising from the midst of fields of bronzed wheat on the up slope of a gently undulating prairie, it commanded the low stretch to the south edge of the woods and formed a natural stronghold from which to resist a frontal attack. A road running southeast, hedged in on either side by clumps of bushes and small trees, was the objective of the Iowans. This road, as well as the north, east, and west edges of the wood, was lined with machine guns, and afforded the enemy cover from which to fire upon the advancing flanks.

The Boche, confident in the strength of his position, was only waiting for the Yankees to appear. He had all the advantages of unobstructed observation and of concealment. His line dominated the rise, and he controlled all the passages northward. With morale far from broken, he felt that he could hold on this line, the keystone of the arch of his defense in the Tardenois, long enough to insure the safe withdrawal of his troops and his immense amount of stores.

In response to the shrill blasts of officers' whistles, E and F Companies, bayonets fixed, jaws set, moved forward in faultless formation to the attack. The Boche

artillery, active before, now fairly tore up the woods behind them and played havoc with the support companies. The line of combat groups advancing over the open field was protected for a short distance by the rising slope, but the instant the low-lying Boches caught sight of their helmets, a murderous fire from half a hundred concealed guns swept upon them, tearing great gaps in their ranks. No order was necessary. In a second they were flat on the ground, formed into a skirmish line, and replying to the fire, although they could not see the enemy. The air was a tumult of shell crashes, shouted commands, snapping bullets, crackle of machine guns, and calls for stretcher-bearers. There was no faltering in the face of the deadly blasts. The ever-thinning line, more by crawling than by rushing, slowly gained ground toward its objective — the road. They had eyes for no other object, not even the mounting toll of the dead and wounded that dotted the field behind them, nor for the gallant progress of their Alabama brothers on the left. The road was their goal, and its capture their only salvation.

E Company, on the right, was having a particularly difficult time, for the French were unable to advance more than a hundred yards, leaving the machine guns on the eastern edge of the clearing free to give all their attention to the Iowa flank. F Company, too, was suffering, but it received most unexpected reënforcement. Working through the smoke and underbrush of the forest, two platoons of D Company, under Lieutenant Peyton and Sergeant Morrow, had veered to the left, somehow missing Company G which was in support, and kept on going until they suddenly found themselves in the fight. Slowly feeding their men to the firing line, they added their Springfields to the jarring roar.

Lieutenant Peyton was halted temporarily by a fierce outburst of fire. Two of his men had taken refuge in a still smoking shell hole just behind him. An enemy shell found its way there and exploded between the two. The officer was uninjured, though somewhat shaken from the force of the explosion. He was just recovering from the daze when he heard a groan, and then in painful, halting jerks:

"Holy Father, guide well the soul I know you will soon release."

He turned to find Private James M. Gallagher fast sinking from a gaping wound.

"Lieutenant, Lieut-ten-ant, I — am — dying, please, won't you —" he gasped, unable to finish the sentence.

"Yes, Gallagher, what is it you want me to do?", he encouraged.

"Write"— there came another halt, which in the tensity of the moment seemed like an hour. "Write my Mother that I did my duty."

Peyton was inwardly praying that he might be spared to carry out the lad's last wish, when another voice at his side, calmer and more steady, spoke:

"Lieutenant, will you write for me, too? I'm done for."

The officer thought for a moment that it must all be a fantastic nightmare, but he leaned over to look more closely at Basil E. Cowell. The waxen face was fringed with blood, and there was a strange calm about him; and as he gazed at him there, Cowell crossed the line into another world. He had delivered his message; and like Gallagher he knew what the message would be, for he must have realized how well he had served. Such were the tragedies of the battle field.

It was a terrible hour for Major Stanley as he watched the slaughter of his men from the southern edge of the clearing. The field before him was clear to the Farm, and his eye took in every detail of the fight — the smoke, the flash, the upheaval, the forward surge of the lean brown line, the struggling wounded. He could but exult in the way his men went against the enemy, and the way they submitted to death. He saw, too, the brave sons of the South, with the rebel yell on their lips and their bayonets held high, come across the field on the run. And then he saw them mown down as the enemy guns began to rattle.

Slowly, irrepressible as the rising tide, the jagged line advanced. Suddenly the firing from the road ceased, and Boche machine gunners were racing for their lives across the clearing. But only a few attained the safety of the woods. What a cheer went up! The first objective had been taken. The road was ours!

Company F was now in liaison with Alabama at the Farm and the line was intact. At the same time it was subjected to a heavy artillery fire and machine gun opposition from the more distant emplacements. Company E, once it had gained the road, was able to go no farther. It was easily understood why, the next day when there was an opportunity to view the obstacles that they were trying to overcome. The enemy in the woods to the right had all the cover that troops on the defense could wish for. At the edge, beneath the heavy growth of shrubbery, was a deep drainage ditch, a natural trench to defend and enfilade the field before the Croix Rouge Farm. The Boche made good use of it. Along this line they had placed their machine guns, constructing overhead cover that made the emplacements shrapnel proof and left only a loophole through which to fire and swing the gun.

It was in a similar ditch following the road that our men took position. Others dug fox-holes, and the men back in the woods prepared shelters as best they could. They had learned the first lesson of the mightiness of the spade — or the various and sundry implements impressed into service to accomplish its purpose.

At 6:15 Major Stanley sent the following message to Colonel Bennett:

"First objective taken. Men digging in. The enemy has machine guns in the edge of the woods. Will hold position."

The French on the right had found the enemy too strongly intrenched to advance so far, and were halted before they could attempt their turning movement. With them during part of the action was B Company of the 168th.

Like the two platoons of D Company it had wandered a bit out of its sector. Any one who was fighting in the Forêt de Fère that day can swear to it that it was not a difficult matter to lose oneself. It was only slightly less dense than a tropical jungle, and the smoke and gas, the latter requiring the wearing of masks, did not make it easier to find the way about. Lieutenant Witherell, who was in command, had only the compass to guide him. There were casualties in moving through the woods, which increased as they advanced. Held up on the Le Charmel road by a storm of whistling bullets, Witherell realized that instead of being in the rear of the Second Battalion they were in the front line. Then he saw the French just a short distance ahead, and joined forces.

The French were in trouble. The enemy was ahead of them in number and had caught them with a fire that would have soon spelled annihilation. But, with the

added rifles of the Iowans, they were able to gain the superiority of fire, and by a series of rushes drove the Boche out of his position. The line to which he retired was a seemingly impregnable one, and the advance stopped there.

Lieutenant Whittemore's platoon was to the right, near the opening west of Le Charmel. They, too, thought they were behind Stanley's men, and advanced without particular caution across an open wheat field. The enemy let them get where they wanted them, and then opened up. Those who could made for cover where the Lieutenant rounded them up and prepared for the fight.

With Sergeant Gonzales and several other non-commissioned officers, he started across the road near the point where it enters the southern part of the Vente-Jean-Guillaume. The Sergeant took a few steps and was cut down by the spray of steel. Corporal Pitke, too, was wounded, and Private Moore, who had been ordered to remain on the other side of the road, ran across to give him first aid, and was himself mortally wounded. Then Private Henry W. Myer crawled over and brought Moore back. It was Private Everett H. Woodward who finally reached the wounded Corporal and bound up his wounds. All this was accomplished under the severest kind of fire, which, had the men had only themselves to think of, would have sent them to cover. Heroic as it was, this was only one of numberless acts of bravery and disregard of self that characterized the fighting that afternoon.

The rest of the platoon, in an effort to keep down the fire of the enemy, worked their bolts until the guns were almost too hot to grasp, and until they ran out of ammunition. Had the Boche attempted a counter-attack upon them at the time, there would have been nothing but

cold steel and determination with which to fight him off.

A Company, too, had become scattered. One platoon under Lieutenant Breslin, which for a while had maintained contact with Lieutenant Peyton's platoon, ended up with H Company on the edge of the clearing, but was not in the fight itself, as that company was not actively engaged. But the platoon lost while advancing through the barrage, and from the machine gun fire that poured into them from the Farm on their left. When that ceased, the resumption of heavy artillery fire caused further casualties, including the Lieutenant himself.

The disorganization in the First Battalion was partly accounted for by the fact that its commander could not be located. No one knew just what the orders were, or whether the Boches were 500 or 5000 yards away. Captain Haynes of D Company, after the main body had swerved too far to the right, recognized the error, and getting in touch with Lieutenant Douglass, who was commanding C Company, and Lieutenant Irwin of A, worked back into the proper sector.

Prior to the attack, Lieutenant Fisher of F Company was holding, with the Fourth Platoon, the southwest angle of the woods, so that half of his men faced north and the rest east. As he was on the extreme left flank of the regiment, and had no contact on the left, he sent out a patrol to gain liaison. With the greatest difficulty this patrol made its way through alternate artillery and machine gun fire to a French regiment at least a half kilometer to the left, and reported back to the Lieutenant just as the German barrage started in earnest. It appeared that the 167th was in the woods some distance to the rear but was moving forward.

At the same time a runner, who had been knocked down

twice by shells and who had not yet completely recovered his breath, brought the order to advance. Captain Casey was to step out of the woods and give the signal. The enemy bombardment had increased in violence, and shells were searching every foot of the wood. While lining up his men Fisher had ten casualties, and as he was waiting for the whistle the right flank of the 167th swung through his left in squad columns and formed a skirmish line at the edge of the clearing.

From his position Fisher could see nothing of Captain Casey, or the rest of F, but when Alabama started forward he realized that they would be in danger of being flanked if he did not maintain contact with them. So as quickly as possible he passed down the word to the effectives in his platoon and stepped out with twenty-five men. From the beginning they met with a terrific fire from a score of enemy machine guns. They were enfiladed from the woods, and were under fire from the Farm as well, while they themselves had no target.

Under the circumstances there was but one thing to do. They could not remain where they were and be cut up; they would not retreat; and their only hope was to keep going and to pray that there would be enough of them left to hold on. The air was thick with flying bullets and screaming shrapnel, and the line grew smaller and smaller. Twice the men on either side of the Lieutenant were hit while lying flat on the ground, so intense was the fire that seemed to cover every inch of land and air. In spite of this Fisher and his men pressed on. "None shall look behind" was still echoing in their ears.

The other three platoons of F Company were approaching the shelter of the road defenses, but the men of the Fourth were absolutely without protection. But

finally they reached the Farm — two of them, Fisher and Private Elwyn O. Sells. The rest lay out on the open field — some dead, some dying.

Alabama was just finishing off the Boches with cold steel and bombs, and sniping at the few who had made their get-away across the field. Lieutenant Sharpe of Company K, 167th, was about to jump off again with eight men in an attempt to reach the opposite stretch of woods. Sells, who had been badly wounded before he got to the Farm, wanted to go on, but Fisher ordered him to stay where he was, while he attached himself to the Alabama party, and off they started. They had gone but a few yards when Lieutenant Sharpe was hit in the leg, whereupon he surrendered command to Fisher, who held it for a brief period. Another advance of twenty-five or thirty yards, and then Fisher, too, was cruelly wounded — in the face. The remaining men, now without a leader and unable to make any headway, fell back upon Lieutenant Peyton's position and remained with him until morning. For several hours Fisher lay unconscious while shells and bullets from both sides flew over him; and then, recovering sufficiently, he crawled back under the cover of darkness to the Farm where willing Alabama comrades helped him to the dressing station. A day or so later in the hospital he found himself in the cot next to Lieutenant Sharpe.

This is the story — short, tragic, glorious — of but a single platoon that faced squarely and unflinchingly an almost impossible task. Of the thirty-five men who composed it at the beginning of the attack, but two reached the objective, and the next morning not one remained to see the result of their heroism and sacrifice.

When Major Brewer found that the First Battalion

was not guiding on the axis assigned it, he brought his troops up to immediate support and sent Lieutenant Van't Hof up as the forward end of the line communicating with Major Stanley. This line required constant replacements, as the enemy was combing the woods with 150's; but communication was vital at this stage, and there were no telephones in the forward positions. Earlier in the afternoon the Signal Platoon had lost a number of men from shell fire while laying lines to what were then the advanced positions, and it had been impossible to carry these lines farther. The T. P. S. made only a weak effort towards registering, as the conditions negatived its proper functioning.

Lieutenant Newquist now brought up the Machine Gun Company and established liaison with the Second Battalion. It had been assigned to Major Worthington's organization, but when the latter moved off to the right all but one platoon lost connection with it. It fortunately had but three casualties — one of them, Lieutenant Baumet — while advancing through the forest under the checker-board fire of heavy artillery.

The first objective had been taken; but at what cost was not realized at first. There were few officers left in the Second Battalion; every one in G Company, with the exception of Lieutenant Pearsall, had been killed or wounded. Lieutenant Mills and Lieutenant Rubel were struck by fragments of the same shell — the former being instantly killed. "Sol" was later found in a shell hole endeavoring to give first aid to his own wounded body, but he was then too far gone to have any hope of recovery. Lieutenant Younkin, the company commander, was wounded and slightly gassed. Then Lieutenant Nelson assumed command, and was himself soon hit, but

he remained at his post with his men until the attack was over. Lieutenant Gunderson was the next to stop a piece of German steel; and Lieutenant Pearsall found himself in sole command of the seventy men who were left. Lieutenant McCunn of E Company was mortally wounded; and Lieutenant Crane of E, Captain Casey, Lieutenant Thrasher, Lieutenant Fisher, and Lieutenant Ford of F, and Captain Springer of H Company were all sent to the hospital from wounds received between noon and sunset of the 26th. In all, the casualties of this battalion amounted to 13 officers and 292 men, about 50 of them being killed.

The First Battalion, too, had been badly hit. Lieutenant Peyton and Sergeant Morrow of D Company had between them sixty-five men when they started out, and the next morning an actual count showed but 19 survivors. Other casualties in this company brought up the total to 60. B lost two killed and 59 wounded; A, two killed and 20 wounded; and C, 13 wounded, including Lieutenant Wurster. The Third Battalion lost but a handful altogether. The total losses for the engagement were in the neighborhood of 500.

The machine guns in the opposite woods continued to give trouble, and there seemed no way to master them. The French were unable to dislodge them, and it was useless for our men to attempt to advance against them. The men in the ditch along the road were fairly well protected, but they had to keep their heads down. The others in the open and in the woods dug fox-holes, feverishly scooped out with tops of mess kits, bayonets, and bare hands under the sizzling stream.

Infuriated at the loss of his positions, the enemy determined that, if he could not hold them, the Americans should give them up, too; so he brought down upon the

Alabama and Iowa lines at the Farm and along the road all the artillery and machine gun fire at his command, and as a parting shot drenched the woods with gas. But with the fading light the violence of the combat abated. The fire from across the field and the opposite woods, however, did not entirely stop. From far over in the wheat came occasional flashes from pits so skillfully camouflaged that our men could not find them.

In the meantime the French on our right, who had been able to make no advance, thereby precluding any further forward progression by our troops, withdrew their line to the rear about five hundred yards. Soon after, the Alabama line was withdrawn to the edge of the woods, leaving Major Stanley's men on the advanced line without protection on either flank. This situation was not particularly menacing so long as it remained dark, but it would have been a precarious position to hold in daylight.

Major Stanley had reported to Colonel Bennett on the condition in the line, and at half past eleven the Colonel wrote him: "Brigade directs you to stay where you are, and to inform the 167th of your action and position."

A long, black night succeeded the events of that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon. Pausing long enough to raise the hope that they were satisfied with the distress which they had already created, the German gunners again began dropping their heavy shells here and there with terrifying irregularity, and now and then there broke out the chilling rat-a-tat-tat of a lone machine gun. The ground was literally covered with the dead and the dying — friend and foe lay upon the field where they had met and paid a common price. The groans of the wounded could be heard from afar, and a slow drizzling rain — as if the skies were weeping in commiseration at their lot —

only added to the suffering. To recall the situation it is necessary to fall back upon the imagination, for only in wild dreams can such unthinkable horrors exist.

As soon as the lines were made secure for the night, all energies were directed to the removal of the wounded. The Pioneers and the Band assumed the greater part of this difficult task. They had only narrow paths, deep in mud and dissected by water-filled shell holes, to follow through the woods with their stretchers. The Pioneers had already been called upon to bury the dead left behind by the 26th Division, and as soon as that was completed they were put to repairing roads that ambulances and caissons might pass more easily. So they had had no rest. And the Band, after a fatiguing march, was sent to the front the moment it arrived; and for thirty hours, without either food or sleep, they carried wounded back to the aid stations. Their hands and shoulders became blistered and sore from handling the stretchers, and they could have dropped any moment, but they stuck it out.

For the men in the line there was little peace. In the hurried advance many had thrown away their packs, and they were now cold and wet. Even those back in the woods in the shell holes had no shelter from the storm; and they were kept on the alert the major part of the night, as the Boche threw over quantities of phosgene and tear gas.

But the Germans, too, had suffered, and were suffering. Although they had lost few prisoners, there were many of their dead intermingled with those of Alabama and Iowa; and it had been a great blow to be forced to surrender the strongly fortified line which they had thought secure for an indefinite period. Five prisoners captured at the Farm enabled us to identify the 377th Regiment of the Tenth Landwehr Division as one of the

opposing units, and from them it was learned that their division had been thrown in to reënforce the 201st on the front of the Rainbow.

Shortly after midnight there appeared in the skies to the north great lights, accompanied by deep rollings and rumblings. It was a happy sign, for it meant that the enemy had given up hope of saving his massive stores of ammunition and was burning them to prevent their falling into the hands of the Allies.

About half past one in the morning Company C was switched over to protect the flank of the Second Battalion in the gap between the forces of Captain Casey and Captain Norris of the 167th; otherwise the positions of the regiment remained unchanged: the Second Battalion along the Farm road and in the fringe of the woods; Major Brewer's battalion along the first unimproved road south of the clearing; the part of D Company not on the line with F, and most of A Company, about two hundred feet ahead of the Third Battalion; and B Company still off to the right with the French.

"The Brigade Commander directs", wrote Colonel Bennett at 1:42 A. M., "that the support battalion furnish enough troops to make connection between your right and the French left secure. That you are not to retire from position which has been gained at such heavy cost." This message reached Major Stanley after daylight. Just before dawn, he had withdrawn all his lines, except the outposts, to the woods so that they would be protected from enemy aerial observation. It was in no sense abandoning the line, for we were in position to prevent its recapture by the Boche, and the outposts were on the alert for any offensive move on his part. As the men crawled back, a full moon broke through the heavy clouds to light their way, but they were unseen and unmolested.

XXIV

THE ADVANCE TO THE OURCQ

With the new morning came a sudden stillness on La Croix Rouge field. The enemy was nowhere in sight, and his machine guns were silent. French scouts, pressing through to the far end of the Vente-Jean-Guillaume, soon reported that the Germans were moving in broken lines to the valley of the Ourcq.

The stage was set for the curtain to rise on the second act of the drama.

"It is reported that the French on your right are advancing and that the enemy is falling back. Keep in liaison with the French, and in contact with the enemy by patrols. If the enemy withdraws, pursue and advise me. Stokes Mortar and 37mm cannon will report to you at once", wrote Colonel Bennett to Major Stanley at eleven o'clock. The enemy was to be given no rest, and his withdrawal was to be made as costly as possible.

The fore part of the morning had been devoted to the reorganization of our forces, and to the evacuation of the wounded. Stretcher-bearers, searching through the trampled grain that none might be overlooked, carried their suffering burdens back to the aid stations where they received all the attention the harassed Medical Detachment could give them. But it was afternoon before the last were loaded into ambulances and started back to the hospital. Then there were the dead to be buried: fifty precious bodies to be laid away almost within the shadow of the farm-fortress under the care of Chaplain Robb and Chaplain Hatch.

When the French mounted scouts had penetrated to the point where they could observe the open country to the north and east of the Forêt de Fère and found that it was clear of the enemy, it was surmised that he had withdrawn to another position which he would attempt to hold until he could clear the salient south of the Vesle of the masses of vital stores that were accumulated there.

According to the German Staff, the general retreat on the night of the 26-27th of July to the Fère-en-Tardenois–Ville-en-Tardenois line was in conformity with a prearranged schedule. But it is not unreasonable to infer that the Germans withdrew only because the position was getting too hot for them. They always found it convenient to announce a "strategic withdrawal" whenever circumstances forced a retirement, but their ostrich-like refusal to face the facts deceived no one but their own deluded countrymen. It is needless to add that the subsequent withdrawal to the Vesle, too, was in conformity with a prearranged schedule — a schedule that was amended to comply with the exigencies of the situation. And it will be seen that the Rainbow Division and the 168th Infantry somewhat influenced the intentions of the Germans in this latter move.

At two o'clock in the afternoon all was in readiness for the resumption of the advance. The First Battalion was to lead out in conjunction with the French 156th Regiment on the right; and when they had cleared, the Third was to follow in support. Major Stanley was to constitute the reserve.

For some reason there was great delay in setting the column of the First Battalion in motion, and General Brown, desiring to expedite the advance, ordered Major Brewer to move into the line on the left of Major Worth-

ington and to establish liaison with Major Donovan's battalion of the 165th Infantry which had come in between us and Alabama.

Starting out in a column of twos from the point where the farm road entered the woods, and heading along the east side of the clearing, near which the men of the First Battalion were moving, the Third Battalion marched forward at a rapid pace. As it came abreast of the Croix Rouge Farm, the Brigade Commander approached on horseback. "Push on as fast as you can", he said. "You are to gain the Ourcq, secure the heights beyond, and hold them."

The field was heavy with recent rains, and although the men were not heavily equipped — just the necessary weapons and ammunition — it was difficult plodding through the mud. As yet no opposition had been offered, but they could not expect to go forward much farther without discovery. Already there was a lively artillery action to the right where the French and Americans of the Third Division were moving on Courmont and Ronchères. In the long twisting lines there was laughing and joking — mere camouflage to conceal uneasiness, but it served to hearten those who could not assume, in anticipation of what was to follow, any outward expression of cheerfulness.

The Third Battalion had now emerged from the woods and was passing La Croix Blanche Farm, with a stretch of open, rolling prairie between it and a barrier of hills several kilometers beyond. A row of flashes from the opposite heights, a shriek of speeding steel, and then the sound of tearing flesh, louder even, it seemed, than the explosion of the shells that were plowing up the ranks. Swiftly the battalion was thrown into battle formation,

and steadily it continued its forward move in the teeth of the enemy batteries that had the range down to an inch. One would see the blinking flame from the gun, hear the approaching shell, and drop to the ground to avoid the force of the explosion. If he were lucky, he received nothing more than a shaking-up and a shower of mud. But the cries of the wounded and the appeals for stretchers that were taken up and passed to the rear told tragic stories. At each burst the soldiers' gaze would stray to the smoking spot. What comrade had gone this time? That was the question that always came first. Khaki figures darting to the newly made crater, a limp form lifted on the canvas litter, and another perilous journey commenced — then eyes again to the front.

In spite of the increasing violence of the fire there was no panic, no indecision, no break in the ranks. All flat at the whistle of a shell, then up again and forward. It was such a wonderful exhibition of perfect battle discipline and of courage that one wanted to stand up and yell for sheer pride.

A detachment from the French Sixth Cavalry Division had been carrying out a reconnaissance ahead of us. One of the first shells exploded at the side of a *chasseur à cheval,* and blew him off his horse. By some act of Providence neither rider nor mount was injured, and the soldier calmly remounted before our eyes and galloped ahead. Another shell severed the legs of a magnificent black charger as cleanly as if with a knife, and the Frenchman, ignoring his own danger, took time to mercifully end his steed with a bullet between the eyes, and then proceeded afoot to fulfill his mission.

The First Battalion was paralleling the advance of the Third, but a ridge separating them shut off the sight of

the other. As this column reached the crest of the hill near La Cense Farm an airplane bearing the Allied insignia, but believed to have been piloted by a Boche, swooped low over it, and in a minute shells of large calibre were falling in their midst. The first one hit about fifty feet ahead of D Company, and the second exploded squarely in the First Platoon. Captain Haynes shuddered as he saw Lieutenant Peyton blown high into the air, and could not bring himself to look again. But months after, that officer had recovered sufficiently to leave the hospital. The third shell wiped out an entire squad in the Third Platoon. This was the nature of the punishment meted out to the advancing troops as they kept on, their hearts beating in their throats, but their will power mastering their fear.

On they marched. "To gain the Ourcq", that was the first mission. "Push the men as fast as possible." They needed no urging. The Third Battalion moved slightly to the left to take the cover offered by the road cutting through the farthest tip of the forest. The New York battalion on the plateau to the left was suffering from the artillery fire, too, but the moving line in open formation presented a more difficult target to the enemy. La Favière Farm was now within a stone's throw of the advanced elements. A distance of nearly five kilometers had been covered, and in remarkably short time.

The forward progress had taken the Iowans past pits where German machine gunners had lurked, past dead Germans and abandoned machine guns. They now saw great piles of ammunition, stacked like cord wood. This much the enemy had been unable to remove or to destroy.

A kilometer and a half away flowed the tiny Ourcq. The Third Battalion was to cross at the bridge directly

northeast of La Favière Farm, and the First farther up to the right. The line was now advancing through rippling seas of burnished wheat, in what the French call *un paysage riant* — a smiling landscape — variegated fields of grain, brightened with touches of poppies, corn flowers, and daisies; feathery, Corotesque trees lining the streams that cut in between the full-breasted hills. Here and there peeping over the bosom of the rise, a chaste spire. Overhead an azure sky flecked with fleecy clouds. Any one with the least eye for beauty could not help but take in the loveliness of the picture.

However, the regiment had come not to feast on the beauties of nature but to dislodge the enemy. Lieutenant Christopher of M Company, with scouts, was sent ahead by Major Brewer to seize the bridge and hold it until his battalion arrived. It was unknown whether or not the bridge had been destroyed, and the width and depth of the stream were yet to be determined. It was growing dusk when the line approached within three hundred yards of the crossing and halted to await word from Lieutenant Christopher. To the left it was noticed that the New Yorkers were making little progress, for they had encountered a heavy artillery and machine gun opposition. Now their advance stopped short and some of them were falling back. What did it mean?

Lieutenant Christopher and his men in advancing had drawn machine gun fire upon themselves, and the Boches immediately directed a violent artillery fire upon their objective. The officer found that the bridge was demolished but the stream fordable. Any crossing would be difficult and costly, but he reported that he could effect it, and disposed his men for the dash across.

Major Brewer was immediately in rear of his troops,

directing every movement. It was a time of tense anxiety. "We will cross", he repeated, and the battalion moved forward, M Company leading, followed by K, with I and L bringing up the rear. Part of the guns trained on the bridge were diverted to the advancing line, and zipping machine gun bullets cutting swaths through the waist-high wheat began to take their toll. The whole valley was reverberating with the crash of explosions, flying pieces of steel tore through the air and buried themselves in the soft earth with dull thuds, and wounded were struggling back.

Our artillery had been unable to equal the swift pace set by the infantry, and as there was an absolute lack of support from that quarter the men of the Third Battalion had to rely solely upon their rifles. The auto-rifle men were crawling forward to clear anything in the path of Christopher's men. They were starting across.

At that moment Major Brewer received a message from Major Donovan stating that he was withdrawing to permit the artillery to lay a barrage on the river valley and to sweep the hills beyond in an endeavor to silence the vicious machine guns. With his flank exposed, and his position in the valley made untenable, there was nothing for Major Brewer to do but order a retirement. He directed his men to fall back about five hundred yards to a position on the side of the hill opposite La Favière Farm, and then dispatched a runner to notify the First Battalion of his intentions.

In the meantime this organization had been advancing with difficulty. For two hours it had been stopped by a violent barrage about one hundred yards north of La Cense Farm, the men scattering to shelter along the bank of the Rû de la Goulée and in shell holes while shrapnel

and gas burst all around them. At this stage the battalion had lost connection with its commander, and Captain Haynes called a conference of the company commanders to determine the course of action. With the Major had disappeared orders and maps. After they decided to withdraw about fifty yards to the better protection of a wheat field, the Captain went over to consult with the French on his right. The officer in charge of the French battalion finally produced a map, and showed Captain Haynes where his own men were located. But during the night the French withdrew altogether and left that flank open.

The troops of both battalions pulled back under a well-directed fire of shells, and much enemy machine gun ammunition was spent on the First as it crawled back over the hill. The Boches accompanied the retirement of the Third with a shower of gas, but as it fell mostly to the left the men noted the direction of the wind and changed their route to avoid it, thus being able to continue without having to adjust their masks. They were gradually learning all the tricks of the game.

The Second Battalion remained in the woods to the southeast of the Croix Rouge Farm until dark, and was able to move to its position for the night along the creek in the northern edge of La Ventelette Woods without serious difficulty. When the advance in the afternoon commenced, Regimental Headquarters moved forward to the P. C. vacated by Major Brewer, and at ten o'clock at night moved to La Croix Rouge Farm itself.

Immediately upon arrival at the new line, outposts were established and the men dug in. There had been little sleep for three nights, and no one slept this night. It was one of the most terrible in the experience of the

regiment. Through the long, shivering hours the enemy batteries on the heights across the river searched the hillside and valley for victims. Wherever the men lay, scattered over that big field, the enemy seemed to find them. German shells, shrieking like Valkyries come to bear their dead off to Valhalla, crashed in endless succession, until the constant hammering shook the nerves to the point of madness. Close to the ground the men huddled as the explosions crept nearer and nearer. First one in front, hurling bits of mud and stone into the shallow fox-holes; then one just beyond. An eternity of agonized suspense until the next one broke. The frantic cry of "Stretcher-bearer" that made one shudder with its piercing note of anguish and terror sounded often between dusk and dawn on that dreadful field.

Some of the men left their fox-holes and took to the bed of the shallow creek, cold and muddy-bottomed, because it offered a degree more of protection, but even there they were not immune. But before dawn the Boche artillerymen tired and granted the regiment an ephemeral respite.

XXV

THE CAPTURE OF HILL 212

About eight o'clock in the evening of the 27th of July, as the troops were withdrawing from the Ourcq, a motorcycle dashed up to Regimental Headquarters with a message from Brigade Headquarters stating that the attack was to be pressed during the night with every means at our disposal, and that it was to be continued with the line of heights on the north bank of the Ourcq, marked by Seringes–Nesles as the objective. It was to be a surprise assault without artillery support, and the troops were to confine themselves to the use of the bayonet. Had this proposed operation been carried out, it is more than likely that the surprise would have been on the attackers, for they were unfamiliar with the terrain, while the enemy was well prepared to meet them. However, the order came from the Sixth Army and could not be questioned. All four infantry regiments of the 42nd Division were to attack abreast, each with one battalion in the line.

Colonel Bennett immediately notified his battalion commanders and awaited further orders, but that was the last that he heard of the matter. At midnight Major Winn, from 84th Brigade Headquarters, found Major Brewer at his P. C. on the hillside, and told him that General Brown had directed that the advance be resumed at daylight, with the same objectives — the heights on the north bank of the Ourcq. At four in the morning Major Brewer received his order from Colonel Bennett to attack

in an hour with his battalion. The First Battalion was to follow in support.

The positions to which the Germans had retired were naturally strong and had been skillfully arranged so as to command every approach, at the same time affording themselves almost perfect concealment. The machine gun pits dug into the wheat fields and camouflaged with the fresh straw were practically invisible. Thus we were to be forced to accept battle under conditions of the enemy's choosing with all the disadvantages on our side.

The hills confronting the Rainbow in general sloped back gradually from the river to a height of from forty to eighty meters above it to the north and east. Their defenses were linked together and capable of mutual support. To the rear, on high ground guarding the flanks, were three patches of woodland, the Bois Pelger, the Bois de la Planchette, and Les Jomblets, which the Boches had liberally stocked with artillery and machine guns. This natural bastion is considered by an authority on the Second Battle of the Marne to have been "by far the most serious obstacle encountered on the front of the Sixth Army." It was for the 42nd Division to reduce it.

The enemy had reënforced this stronghold with new divisions rushed forward to stem the advance of the Allies, for he was being pushed faster than he could withdraw his supplies, and he had to gain time to enable him to organize his ultimate line of resistance on the Vesle. In addition, he had brought up quantities of field artillery and some heavy pieces and had concentrated numerous squadrons of battle planes in the sector to harass our troops, delay our advance, and deny us observation.

The immediate objective of the 168th was the dome-like eminence of Hill 212, the steepest and most forbidding

rise in the sector. Planted in wheat, ready for the scythe, without a tree to offer concealment or protection to the assailants, it was a problem to be worked out only with the utmost coöperation of the artillery. It was skirted, a hundred yards or so from the base, by the northwesterly-flowing Ourcq, a stream hardly worthy of the name creek, but dignified by the French as a river, whose headwaters lay in the Forêt de Ris, five kilometers to the south. It was not more than two feet deep and eighteen feet wide, but the scrub willows along its edge, and its steep banks made it an obstacle to be reckoned with in attacking the hill beyond. Two branches joined at the ruined Moulin Caranda, in the right half of the battalion sector, the right fork leading down a draw from the village of Cierges. On the left of the hill, and at its base, was the clustered village of Sergy.

At half past four in the morning Lieutenant Bradley with two auto-rifle squads from Company K moved forward to secure the crossing, with the understanding that the main body of the battalion would be there at five o'clock. Major Brewer had himself gone forward to make a personal reconnaissance, and noted with satisfaction a heavy mist enveloping the entire valley of the Ourcq. It was his intention to take advantage of this fortuity, believing that he would be able to cross the river and penetrate to the base of the hill before the enemy discovered the move.

While the Third Battalion was preparing for its advance, Captain Haynes, who had been trying the whole night long to get in touch with his battalion commander, appeared at Major Brewer's P. C. and asked for instructions. It was well that some one from the First Battalion had reported, for in a few minutes the Third would be

on its way to Hill 212. The Captain secured what information Major Brewer could give him and sped back to his own troops.

At 4:50 Lieutenant Bradley sent back word that the way was clear, and the Major ordered Lieutenant Lainson to lead out with L Company, to push across the stream, advance five hundred yards up the hill, and hold the position.

The artillery was giving no support whatsoever. The Huns on the top of 212 could have slept until noon if they had waited for our guns to disturb them. But it was an impossible task that had been assigned the batteries mired in the Forêt de Fère. Back in the woods an artillery captain was standing gazing dejectedly at the wet, heavy track ahead of him. His guns were parked by the roadside. "Is this a war", he inquired of a passing doughboy, "or is it a Marathon?"

With bayonets held at the high port, L Company was cutting through the damp, bowing wheat toward the river, and soon was crossing on the stones of the crumbled bridge. Once across, it was formed into a fan-shaped skirmish line which was quickly prolonged on the right by Lieutenant Cotter's Company K, and on the left by M Company, commanded by Lieutenant Briggs. Both of these companies had lost their commanding officers the previous day, Lieutenant Ericsson being severely wounded and Captain Hupp a victim of gas. Captain Dunn with I Company was given the mission of supporting the battalion as a whole. By six o'clock all of Major Brewer's troops had crossed the Ourcq.

It was his plan, when the line moved forward to the base of the hill, to have the ends of the crescent swing around and envelop the enemy. All was in readiness; M

Company, with the platoons of Lieutenants Christopher, Doocy, and Van't Hof in line from left to right, in liaison with the line of L Company, continued by Lieutenants Bonham, Wallace, Noble, and Jones, with the four platoons of K Company under Lieutenants Bradley, Timothy, Taber, and Lewis completing the front of the battalion.

Screened by the veil of mist, the Americans could look at the surrounding country as one standing concealed in the dark looks into the light. The unsuspecting Boches were running about on the heights above them, carrying ammunition to the guns on the forward slope of the hill. They seemed feverish in their haste.

It was then that Major Brewer gave one of the most fateful commands ever issued to men of the 168th. Forward, and silently, the giant crescent moved out of the vaporous depths. The first glint of the rising sun on a seeming sea of bayonets was the signal for a murderous outbreak of machine guns. First, a rat-tat — rat-tat-tat, and then an overwhelming crackle that sounded like a wind-whipped forest fire striking dry timber.

Then the Iowans started to work. Down to the ground they dropped, Chauchats and Springfields answering the web-fed guns which were spitting out steel from above. In the first rush Lieutenant Christopher S. Timothy of K Company was mortally wounded, but he had shown the way and his men carried on.

The Boche was literally sweeping the valley with his machine guns from his positions on the lower slope. With only his front to watch, he was able to concentrate his entire attention on the Third Battalion. Surely the Americans could never pierce such a curtain of fire. But he did not then know the Americans of the Rainbow as he

later came to know them. It was a situation that called desperately for tanks, but none were available. There was as yet no sound from our artillery and no planes were in sight — nothing but the weapons that the infantrymen carried with them.

Those swiftly working Springfield bolts, shoving fresh cartridges into the breach, the flaming, rattling Chauchats, were having their effect. But so was the German fire. At every rush, a man fell, but the line crept forward like the flooding tide winning back its beach. Wounded men were struggling to rise, some were staggering forward, and the field behind them was already dotted with fast stiffening forms.

It was difficult to keep the auto-rifles manned, for they were the principal target of the machine gunners. But whenever a man fell, another took his place. There was to be no break in the advancing waves. Here a rushing squad, there a single doughboy skimming forward. With jerks and bounds, in little strips and pieces, the line was working up the hill. Those gleaming bayonets were coming closer to the machine gun pits.

Before the sun had risen, Major Brewer had sent back word:

"We are advancing."

Shortly after, the message:

"We are across the Ourcq, advancing."

And before the sun was well over the hill:

"Advanced to the base of Hill 212. Casualties heavy. Advancing."

That was the idea —"Advancing". A brave advance — but at what a cost! For every yard gained a life was given. Still the line went on. The heart sank at the horror of it and rebounded with pride! Nor was the

Boche unaware of the nearing line. Up from the Pelger Woods he sent reserves, and what a reception they met when they came under fire of the rifles from the valley, and from the base of the hill where the Americans had rushed to the protecting ledge of the road!

There have been many battle cries, but here was a real one. Out of the morning's fight it came, and up and down the line it echoed as the ever-thinning squads pressed on:

"Give the square-heads Hell, give 'em Hell!"

In the center of the valley was Major Brewer watching the advance. Never was there a prettier skirmish line than that one in which death was stalking this Sabbath morning. Had it not been for the guns speaking their plain meaning, one might have mistaken it for a well-staged maneuver. But heavy sorrow was being written into the homes back in distant Iowa.

The German artillery was now added to the clamor and to the destruction, but again the cry rang out: "Give 'em Hell, give 'em Hell!"

A few grey clad figures had doffed their helmets, and were racing across the wheat field. Farther up the hill others were up and moving. The enemy was giving way!

"Look at 'em run, look at 'em run", the Americans shouted, so stimulated by excitement and flushed with victory that they forgot their own danger. It was a great sight for I Company, taking in the whole picture as it moved around the woods along the river.

"Off the road and up the hill", came the command from Major Brewer and Lieutenant Lainson. But Lieutenant Bonham and his men, coöperating with Lieutenant Van't Hof, were already out in front. They circled about, throwing a man in to the right, then one to the left, while the rifles in the center kept the enemy down.

Then out of a pit in the wheat came grey figures with their hands raised high. *"Kamerad, Kamerad"*, they called in terror. But on these officers went with their platoons, breaking through the center of the German line, then turning backwards, scooping in what Boches remained. Van't Hof's platoon captured twenty-five prisoners and six machine guns, which were promptly turned on the retreating enemy. Bonham found four in one place. Ten others in a trench waved a white flag in surrender, but as the Americans approached, one of them attempted to fire. However, the Iowans were on them, and Sergeant Loetz had bayonetted two of them before the cartridge belt was well started.

Farther to the left the group under Lieutenant Christopher and Sergeant Lepley, undismayed by a merciless and direct machine gun fire, kept on until six guns and the thirteen surviving Germans who manned them were in their hands.

More prisoners were now coming down the hill, bearing wounded — American wounded. "Oh, such terrible yells", exclaimed one of these prisoners when he had recovered from his fright sufficiently to speak. It was cheering to see the clumsily-booted Germans plodding to our rear, submissive, trembling. It meant that victory was ours — partial victory, at least, for nearer the summit guns were still pouring forth a deadly, winnowing fire.

Company K on the right had been forced to refuse its flank on account of failing liaison. As its line of advance did not take it up the hill, it was having no part in the hand-to-hand fighting, but in the open valley it was suffering from long range machine gun fire and from a punishing artillery barrier.

Here and there on the slopes of the hill a machine gun nest was holding out, but gradually they were encircled and rushed and the crews were captured or killed. Lieutenant Doocy, with his platoon of M Company, was working to the left to arrest the activities of a nest well up the slope. The gunners at the moment were occupied with men advancing farther down the hill, and Doocy and his men were able to get in behind and charge them with their bayonets, killing them at their posts before they realized their danger. Perhaps these youthful volunteers did not know all the fine points of the art of fighting, but they had equalled anything the Boches had shown them so far by way of example.

The losses had been so heavy and the fire still so intense that Major Brewer now realized that it would be impossible to gain the top of the hill by frontal attack and have any battalion left. So, engaging the enemy's attention in the center and on the right, he sent I Company and a platoon of M to swoop around from the left. This rapidly executed maneuver took the Boches by surprise, and the flanking party drove right through the Z-shaped patch of wood and clear over the crest of the hill, capturing all the guns in its path. It was too much for the Boches; when they perceived the sudden menace of approaching bayonets, they were suddenly reminded of engagements elsewhere. Those troops whose proud tradition boasted that they had never yielded an inch nor lost a prisoner were in flight — wildly running — before the "untrained" Yankees. Over the hill the hitherto unconquerable soldiers of the Fourth Prussian Guard, that division which was the Kaiser's pride, fled, American riflemen cutting them down as they ran.

As I Company dashed around the left flank, the right of

L Company was struggling up the hill, meeting with renewed resistance. It was a hard fight and so hot that ammunition soon ran low and the Americans had to rely largely on their bayonets and lungs; but, aided by the enemy collapse on the left, they were soon masters of the situation. On the hilltop Lieutenant George B. Noble was painfully wounded by a bullet that pierced his right arm, but that plucky officer treated lightly the suggestion that he go to the rear, and after receiving first aid returned instead to his platoon. He did not leave until late in the afternoon, and only then because he was personally ordered off the field by Major Brewer.

What prodigies of valor were enacted during that bloody and glorious advance! There were men like Private Wilken of M Company who, in spite of three wounds, continued to fire his red-hot Chauchat until his hand was shattered. Corporal Morris Dunn of L Company, when the line was held up by a strong cross fire which killed one of his auto-riflemen, seized the gun himself and operated it out in the open under the fiercest sort of fire until he was himself killed. There were men so inspired by the continuous and contagious display of courage that they did not stop to take into consideration any numerical superiority of the force they might be attacking, but drove ahead as if there were nothing to fear. In a daring rush on a machine gun nest held by twelve of the enemy, Corporal Boustead of M Company, with the four men remaining in his squad, killed one of the Germans, captured the other eleven, and turned the four guns on the retreating foe.

Sergeant Byron W. Hamilton of the same company, after an assault to capture a gun that was creating havoc in our lines, found himself ahead of his men, bleeding in

several places and so badly wounded that he could not stand. He started to crawl and drag himself back, but when he discovered ten or twelve of the enemy bearing down upon him, he forced himself to his knees, and coolly picked off a handful of them. The others, quailing before his deadly aim, turned tail and fled to cover, although he would not have had the strength to reload his rifle.

Shot down by a spray of bullets just as he reached his platoon commander with a message, Private Martin A. Treptow of Company M left behind him another message that was as effective against the enemy as a score of machine guns. In a little blood-stained book found in his breast pocket, he had painstakingly copied:

> America shall win the war.
> Therefore I will work,
> I will save,
> I will sacrifice,
> I will endure,
> I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost,
> as if the whole issue of the struggle depended
> on me alone.

This was his creed, and he had followed it faithfully, like the good soldier he was, to the end. When his comrades gazed upon his features, serene in death, they vowed to carry on his pledge and to collect from the Boche another debt.

Although the first rush had pushed the enemy completely over the crest of 212, our advance was not to continue beyond it. Had the elements on the flanks been able to move up, there is little doubt that the impetus of this assault would have carried the Iowa line across the plateau before the Germans could have reorganized their scattered forces. But it was unsupported on the right,

and from that direction came an inhibiting enfilade fire. The guns concealed along the edge of the Bois Pelger and Les Jomblets controlled the whole ridge extending to the village of Sergy, and still undisturbed on the flank they were able to play viciously on the diminished forces of the 168th.

Major Brewer, in order to protect his men from the shells which were raining down on them from the adjacent heights, now ordered the main body of the battalion to dig in on the reverse slope of the hill, leaving a line of outposts to hold the crest. Shortly after eight o'clock he notified Colonel Bennett:

"Objective reached. Have taken up position on the reverse slope of Hill 212. Machine guns to our front. Artillery support imperative. We are being heavily shelled."

The number of German dead scattered over the hillside and the comparative scarcity of prisoners indicated the nature of that two hours of sanguinary contest. The Boche, depending upon his artillery and cleverly emplaced machine guns to parry our thrust, was exposing few infantrymen to our charges. But the relatively large number of dead proved that not many of his gunners escaped to the rear. It had in most cases been a fight to the finish.

When Captain Haynes returned from his conference with Major Brewer, he called together the officers of the First Battalion and outlined the plan of attack. Lieutenant Witherell was then sent forward to make a reconnaissance and to determine the possibility of crossing the river. He found that the way was clear to the stream, and brought back the additional information that the Third Battalion was warmly engaged, but was

advancing up Hill 212. Then just as Captain Haynes was about to give the signal for the advance, Major Worthington appeared and reassumed command.

So it was after eight o'clock when the First Battalion, with A Company on the left, B on the right, and C and D in support, moved forward. When the scouts, led by Lieutenant Mackay, appeared on the deadly brow of the hill and started to work down the east slope toward the river, the vigilant machine gunners on the opposite heights caught them full with a savage fire, and soon the whole battalion came in for a severe punishment.

As it neared La Motte Farm the line veered off to the east to protect Major Brewer's right flank, for the troops of the 55th Brigade which had relieved the French 39th Division sometime during the night had not yet come up. The artillery and machine gun fire had now become so heavy that the battalion was forced to halt on the northwest slope of Hill 189, and the men dug frantically for protection from the scorching, whistling stream in the wheat field where they were. From nine o'clock until half past twelve they were held to this position. Major Worthington had no artillery support, and he found it slow work disposing of intrenched machine guns with only Chauchats and rifles. After repeated calls, our guns finally started to operate on the German positions, but at 12:45, when the battalion moved forward and was splashing across the Ourcq, the artillery ceased abruptly.

Once across, the lines of skirmishers spread out and pushed forward cautiously. This thin formation offered an unsatisfactory target to the enemy, most of whose gunners in Les Jomblets were occupied with the Third Battalion; but the artillery was taking a heavy toll. In fact it became so hot that minor wounds which auto-

matically reversed one's objective were welcomed. One chap with an entirely pleased expression and a bleeding shoulder was heading for the rear when a less fortunate comrade called out:

"Hey, Jim, where y'goin'?"

"Home — what'll I tell your folks?", was the cheerful reply.

Another doughboy, streaking for the aid station with his hands clutching his rear, answered the inquiry "Where were you hit?" with the categoric statement "Well, I ain't goin' to sit down to breakfast tomorrow."

The line had now started up the slopes of Hill 188, directly south of and separated by a narrow draw from Hill 212. A and B Companies were rapidly approaching the nearer machine gun nests concealed in a low hedge. Lieutenants Irwin and Witherell were leading their men forward, gradually flanking the guns which were firing on them with such destructive energy. Here a man darted forward, there another, slowly closing in on the enemy; but the moment the Boches discovered the danger, they dashed out of their pits and fled for their lives. A great cheer went up from the field, and the Americans pressed on up the hill.

Cierges, a large Red Cross flag flying from its church steeple, lay directly ahead, and from the village and the surrounding hills came a fire so furious as to check a further advance. The Battalion Commander sent back repeated requests for machine guns and the 37mm cannon to counter it.

As Lieutenant Howell with Sergeant Sleezer's gun crew attempted to cross the valley, a salvo of 77's struck in their midst, killing two (Privates Pieper and C. B. Smith), wounding several, and putting the cannon out of

action. Then the Machine Gun Company was rushed up and was soon spraying the edge of the woods, but not without casualties to themselves. Sergeant Emmett E. Collins of this company was hit by an enemy bullet, but as soon as his wound was dressed he insisted on returning to his section and courageously remained at his post under heavy fire until another bullet killed him.

In spite of this support the enemy fire was too severe to be broken through, and the battalion was ordered to dig in. C and D Companies were withdrawn to the base of the hill, where D, on the extreme right, took position facing southeast, so that the line of the First Battalion, as it dipped to meet K Company on the left and followed up over the hill and then curved sharply to the right, was bowed like a scimitar. It had been necessary to refuse the right flank as a matter of protection, for as yet the 28th Division had been unable to advance and that part of the line was wide open.

While the First Battalion was attempting to come up, the Third was still having difficulties. Its extended lines were suffering from a fire that was falling on it from three directions, and every shell was reducing its numbers. On the hill top, where the view was glorious but the atmosphere unhealthy, Captain Dunn of I Company was struck by a shell fragment that put him out of action, and soon after, Lieutenant Lucas was hit, leaving the company in charge of Lieutenants Noble and Haley.

It was at this time that the Second Battalion came into action. As soon as the First Battalion moved out, shortly after eight o'clock, Major Stanley's battalion, which had moved forward from its position of the night before with orders to support the Third Battalion, followed down the Rû de la Goulée, past La Cense Farm, until the head of

the line was about opposite La Motte Farm. Here it halted while word was sent up to Major Brewer as to its position. German planes had observed this movement, and the battalion was shelled all the way down the valley, and although the men were well scattered out there were numerous casualties. It was near La Cense Farm that 1st Sergeant Hart of H Company and several others were killed by shells from which there was no escape.

It was about 9:30 when they stopped, and for an hour they waited there, lying flat on the ground and digging in to avoid the screaming shells that tore up the ridges on both sides of the valley. From their uncomfortable position they could see the Third Battalion in action on the heights of 212.

Major Brewer had extended his front to the limit, yet there was still a large gap between his troops and the Alabama regiment, caused by the withdrawal of Major Donovan's battalion of the 165th sometime during the night. In the center of this gap lay the village of Sergy, still occupied by the enemy. With Germans to his right, left, and front, Major Brewer now called for reënforcement from the Second Battalion.

In answer to the call, Major Stanley sent him H Company, commanded by Lieutenant Hoar. It crossed the Ourcq under a heavy fire, losing a number of men, and then advanced two-thirds of the way up the hill, halting on the line of the Z-shaped wood, the Bois Vital. Three of the platoons were thrown in on the left of the Third Battalion, while the other, under Lieutenant Creaton, was shoved in to close up a break which had come in the line when I and M Companies had become separated because of conflict in direction. Detachments from Company F now started forward with sorely needed ammunition for the troops on the hill.

Even with this reënforcement the left of the line was still open, and as the enemy was discovered trying to move troops in that direction, Major Brewer, at eleven o'clock, again requested aid of Major Stanley. This time the latter went to the P. C. of the Third Battalion, and after a hasty conference it was agreed that Major Stanley should take over the entire position between the left of the Third Battalion and Alabama.

In the meantime, indications of a counter-attack on the left from the direction of Sergy had become more pronounced, and Major Brewer in reporting to Colonel Bennett the action of the enemy stated that he had used all of his support. It was a tense few minutes for the forces on the hill before the promised aid came in view. But the rest of the Second Battalion was coming to the rescue, crossing the river under heavy bombardment, and rushing to the base of the hill where it could have the protection of the terraced slope. E Company was immediately sent forward to prolong the left of the line, and G and F were held in support along the road where Company D of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion was already dug in.

The Third Platoon of E Company, under Lieutenant Vaughn, went into the line near the crest of the hill, while Lieutenant Herbert F. Wallace, with the Second Platoon, endeavored to effect liaison with the 167th Infantry by establishing a line through the wheat field down the slope toward Sergy. The former was beyond the village to the right, and was exposed to the fire of an enemy machine gun in the church steeple, while the latter was facing the village at right angles to the line of the Third Battalion. Lieutenant Vaughn reported to Major Brewer:

"Lieutenant Wallace, Company E, directly in rear and a little to the left of this position (which is that of Lieutenant Noble of I Company), states that there is an interval of more than 250 yards between his left and the right of the 167th Infantry, thus making this position very difficult in case of attack through this breach. At present we are receiving heavy machine gun fire from the town to the left rear [Sergy]."

To fill in this gap, Major Stanley ordered forward Lieutenant Pearsall with half of his Company G. This action eliminated the possibility of the Americans being driven off Hill 212 by a flank attack from Sergy, and the fire from the village suddenly ceased.

The line of the Second Battalion now extended from a point south of and to the east of Sergy, with its right resting on the edge of the Bois Vital where it joined the left of the Third.

The line of the First Battalion having been stabilized, Major Worthington now notified Major Brewer that he could take over the front of Company K, and the Third Battalion Commander contemplated employing that company on the left in the event that an attack developed from that quarter, but for the time being no change was made.

It was now decided to send a patrol into Sergy to determine the strength of the enemy occupation, for although there was no longer any machine gun fire from that direction it was not thought that the Boches had abandoned it wholly. A group of five men from Company E, led by Corporal Pierce H. Flowers, was chosen for this highly important mission. Working their way in from the east, gliding along from wall to wall in an uncanny silence, they soon penetrated well into the village without

THE CROIX ROUGE FARM WITH 168TH GRAVES IN THE FOREGROUND

BOCHE PLANE BROUGHT DOWN NEAR
CAMP DE LA NOBLETTE JULY 19, 1918

GERMAN DEAD ON THE BATTLE FIELD OF THE
OURCQ AFTER THE RAINBOW PASSED OVER

discovering any signs of life or of the enemy. Suddenly, near the center, they were surrounded by a large party of Germans, who on signal rushed out at them from the cover of the buildings. There was a short and lively skirmish that ended tragically, but not ingloriously, for the Americans fought to the end. Corporal Flowers was shot through the head and instantly killed, as was Private Howard H. Turnbull; Private Charles H. Miller was disabled and taken by the enemy, and was found in a dying condition the next day in a cellar where the Boches had dressed his wounds and left him; Private Emil E. Johnson, although badly wounded, was able to escape, only to die of his wounds later in the hospital. Warren A. Booth, who brought up the rear of the column with Johnson, alone escaped unharmed. He had considerable difficulty in extricating himself. Firing at the enemy to give his wounded comrade opportunity to get away, he found himself pursued to the edge of the village; and then by ducking from shell hole to shell hole while the Boches tried to cut him down, he finally made our lines.

From then on, the machine gun fire from Sergy was so severe that it was impossible for our men to get into the village. Lieutenant Wallace tried several times to approach it from Hill 212, but every effort failed because of the combined efforts of enemy snipers and machine gunners. His last endeavor, made toward evening, resulted in a wound in the arm that sent him from the field.

It was later learned that Alabama had occupied the village for a short time about noon, but because of their lack of troops and the violence of the enemy artillery fire they had withdrawn, the Germans following in on their heels.

While Corporal Flowers was leading his patrol into Sergy, American snipers were creeping forward along other parts of the line, picking off Boche machine gunners as they exposed themselves in the fringes of the Bois de la Planchette and Les Jomblets. Guns from Companies C and D of the 151st Machine Gun Battalion were posted by Majors Stanley and Brewer in their front lines to neutralize the Boche fire, and several of their own guns captured earlier in the day were turned against the enemy. It was this sort of contest which occupied the greater part of the afternoon. But soon the Germans brought their artillery into play, constantly raking the forward positions, so that finally the machine gunners were forced below the hill.

During the morning's advance, when I Company swept over the crest of 212, the corporal of David V. Binkley's squad had been severely wounded, and left for dead when the company retired to the reverse slope. But Binkley had some reason to think him alive as he lay out in the open exposed to the German fire and the possibilities of capture, so he secured permission from his commander to rescue his comrade. Out across the shell-swept ridge he dashed, picked up the still-living corporal, and stumbled back with him to safety. It was a daring exhibition of courage, and quite typical of the gameness which had made possible the advance up that steep hill.

Late in the afternoon the outposts reported the Boches advancing in counter-attack against the center of the line on Hill 212, while they concentrated their artillery and machine guns on the right of Company I, Lieutenant Creaton's platoon of H Company, and the left of Company M.

Now the waiting line could see the enemy approaching

in two perfectly formed waves. Lieutenants Noble, Haley, and Creaton, and Sergeant McManus held their men in readiness. The enemy was striking at our most sensitive spot, determined to regain a vital position.

The two machine guns on this part of the line were relied upon to aid in checking the assault, but an enemy shell fell on one of them, tearing it to pieces, and the crew of the other was driven away.

On came the terrifying waves of grey. The rifles of the Americans started cracking, the Chauchats sputtered out their deadly stream. For a second the Germans staggered, and then a few men rushed out in front with light machine guns to sweep the hill and to screen the final dash of their comrades. The artillery was striking in among the Americans, but those who remained hung on desperately.

There was the silent machine gun. If it could only speak its message to the Huns. But the gunners were gone. Lieutenant Haley voiced his thought to Private Binkley, and then asked him if he could operate it.

"Sir", returned the lad, "I have never operated one, but if there is any possible way for me to work it, I sure will make it talk."

In a moment he had darted forward and was in the saddle. As close as his shadow followed Private Ferdinand H. Prien. Binkley instinctively adjusted the piece, took careful aim, and let fly. Already Prien was shoving in the second clip. They had the exact range of the Boche, and the Hotchkiss played up and down the advancing line, spitting out clip after clip. The Chauchats, taking new courage, rattled away fiercely.

The foremost wave wilted before the fire which was burning up the wheat field through which it was trying to

pass. It went to the ground, and attempted a few feeble rushes. But the Germans were stopped — stopped for good. It was more than they were willing to take, and in the span of a few blood-stained seconds they were rushing back to their own position in disorganized haste. By this time Sergeant Clifford Dudley of Company D, 151st Machine Gun Battalion, had joined Binkley and Prien with another gun, and the three of them mowed down the fleeing Huns.

But the 168th had to pay dearly for its unbroken front. H and I Companies both had been hard hit. Lieutenant Creaton, one arm mangled and a leg nearly shot away at the hip, and undoubtedly suffering the most frightful pain, kept calling to his men to hold fast. The shell that struck him had killed Sergeant Morris and Private Urry, and wounded two others. One of these was being carried back on a ladder with the Lieutenant, and when the party met some litter-bearers, he insisted upon their taking the enlisted man first. "I'm all right", he said, "I can wait."

Lieutenant Heath E. Noble, gritting his teeth lest some cry of pain escape his lips, was brought from the hilltop with a machine gun bullet through his chest. Yet at the dressing station neither he nor Creaton uttered a murmur of complaint, but with full knowledge that death was fast rushing on to meet them awaited their release with calm fortitude. They had not known fear in life, and they were not to surrender now.

Twice had the Prussian Guard shown us their heels, and in retaliation for that humiliation, they turned on the unfortunate Americans a veritable avalanche of gas. "This is the way we teach Yankee swine to rebuff our charge", they seemed to say with their shells.

Then they sent over their airplanes to machine gun and bomb us. Scarlet-tipped Fokkers of von Richthofen and other scourges of the air swept low to spray the ground with lead. There was not an American plane in the sky to challenge this morale-reducing exhibition of superiority. One felt that any sort of old wheelbarrow might have accomplished something, if only to show the doughboys that they had not been abandoned entirely.

Not content with this, the Germans were later detected forming for another counter-attack up the draw on the right, above Cierges. With tensed nerves the battered line saw them assemble out of rifle range, and then move forward in a solid phalanx. But before they were well started a battery of guns from somewhere in our rear suddenly opened up on them. The very first shot, ranged with marvellous accuracy, broke directly in their center and blew a score of them into the air, and it took but a few more to send the rest tearing back to the woods from which they came. The sight of the Boches scattering in disorder before our artillery recalled to the men how they, the day before, had held to their formation through a fire far more destructive. The contrast in conduct had the most healthy effect on their own feeling of superiority, individually and collectively.

The day was now drawing to a close. The blood-red sun, balancing for a moment before plunging over the brink of the farthest hill, bathed the field in a rich glow. In brilliant color, like a flaming Remington canvas, it painted the valley of the Ourcq and its furrowed heights. Never was there a more vivid picture of the dreadfulness and brutality of war than that picked out by the carmine light on the trampled wheat behind the 168th. Dead bodies, pitifully strewn about in grotesque attitudes of

supplication, surprise, despair; some pitched forward on their faces, others crumpled up on their knees as death had caught them trying to struggle to their feet; some in repose, as if asleep; one or two still clenching in lifeless fingers, lifeless cigarettes; a few unrecognizable. Shells falling on men already dead. Everywhere, the débris of battle; here a blood-soaked shoe, there a pierced helmet; ravelled puttees, dented canteens, torn blankets, gory litters. Not a pleasant sight to view, horrible to remember. On the hill a motionless line of khaki figures huddled close to earth to escape the deadly bursts that momentarily dust the sky. Above, a vengeant plane purring its warning.

Silhouetted against the fiery orb two ruddy figures bear a burden with infinite care. In even cadence they move, slow, strong, steady. You can almost hear the rhythmic tramp of their hob-nailed feet. In a moment they will have cleared the treacherous sky-line.

Tramp — tramp — Crash! Stretcher-bearers and burden are slammed to the ground, enveloped by the smoke of an 88. Shuddering, inwardly praying, the observers see the forward man stagger to his feet and hold up a bleeding stump; see his comrade shake himself, rise, and bandage the other's arm. From nowhere a third man appears, nods, catches hold of the handles. Tramp — tramp, they are out of sight.

How often that very scene had been repeated that day! How often, too, had stretcher-bearers, starting out with a living body, reached the aid station to find that they had brought back only a corpse. Blind devotion to duty and to their helpless comrades had characterized their labors as they sweated over the machine-gun-swept hills, over fields showered with the steel and iron of shrapnel, and

the ripping of explosive. By night their numbers had been woefully decreased and those who were left to carry on were hampered by the scarcity of litters. It was naturally slow and tedious work to remove the wounded, and men who were in need of immediate attention were forced to wait their turn. Private Clarence L. Johnson of Company L, with a bullet wound in his abdomen, lay near the battalion post of command from early morning until well into the afternoon. There were others near, but Johnson can never be forgotten. He must have been suffering tortures, but he was a model of composure. Once an involuntary groan escaped him. Half apologetically he said:

"Excuse me, Lieutenant. I didn't mean to complain. When do you think they will move me?"

"It can't be long, Johnson, bear up, old man", the Lieutenant told him.

"All right, Lieutenant. I suppose there are lots of us hit pretty hard."

There did not seem to be much life left in him. His laboring heart could not force the blood to his pallid cheeks, but every now and then a choking cough would cause a hemorrhage. He would brush the precious blood from his mouth and somehow feebly smile.

Then came the report that the Boches were swarming in on the left flank.

"It looks as if it is going to be pretty tough work getting you men out, Johnson, if the enemy breaks through", said the officer.

"Don't you bother about me, Lieutenant. But would you mind slipping a cartridge in my pistol, and have it sort of ready — if you have to leave. You understand, don't you, Sir, they aren't going to get me."

When litters failed, improvised substitutes of duck-boards and blankets were impressed into use. The sunken road at the base of 212 was strewn with wounded waiting to be taken to the rear while shell fragments whirred and whistled about them. Because of his fearlessness and ability Sergeant Maxwell Farley of Company K was assigned the task of looking after the wounded on the field. No one was in too exposed a position for "Doc" Farley to go to his aid, no hand more gentle than his. At one time he had gathered together and was watching over no less than forty-six wounded men. His prompt and courageous attention was the means of saving many lives.

Private Andy Thomsen, big, brawny, brave, spent the day crawling up to the firing line to put on first aid bandages, lifting the wounded men on his back and carrying them to the stretcher, and then holding up his end without relief while relays took turns at the other.

"You are exhausted", they told him at the aid station when evening came on.

"Exhausted! Not yet — not as long as there are wounded up there", he answered.

The wounded, whenever possible, made their way back to the dressing station alone, in order to release the stretcher-bearers for more desperate cases. Many in throbbing pain, hobbled back, barely able to make it without assistance.

The problem was by no means solved when the wounded reached the dressing stations, for they were pouring in in such numbers that there were not enough ambulances to evacuate them. The Boche was covering every approach with his artillery, and several of the ambulances were demolished on the road. By midnight an extra ambulance

company had been put at our service, and by utilizing trucks, carts, and anything else on wheels that was going to the rear, the congestion was gradually relieved.

The troops in the line were preparing for the night. They had eaten little in the past four days. They had started off in the morning without having had any supper the night before and with no breakfast. Noon had passed, however, without thought of food, and it was dark before they had time to realize their hunger. But there was no food to be had, and their canteens were empty. Every wounded man who had any reserve rations on him — there were few of them — left his supply behind when he started for the rear. In order to relieve their hunger, the men searched the packs of the dead for bully beef and hard-tack. In spite of misgivings, canteens were filled from the Ourcq. What if a few dead Boches and horses did lie in the stream farther up. One gives little thought to such trifles when the tongue is parched and the water cool.

Regimental Headquarters had kept in touch with the front line throughout the day. At four in the morning Colonel Bennett and his staff moved to La Croix Blanche Farm and later on to La Cense amid its ghastly sights — dead everywhere, Boches, Americans, horses. Finally about half past one in the afternoon when the entire regiment was on the other side of the Ourcq, the Regimental P. C. and Dressing Station was established at La Motte Farm, in full view of the fighting line and of the enemy. The shelling here was almost uninterrupted. In the late afternoon, just as Colonel Bennett had come down stairs, a shell struck in the courtyard and caught a litter that was coming to the dressing station. The wounded man and three of the carriers were killed, and

the fourth was wounded. One of the bodies was hurled by the explosion at the Colonel's feet, spattering him with blood. The fire was so intense that it was folly to remain in this position, but they stuck it out until eight in the evening when they moved back a thousand yards to La Cense. But Lieutenant Williams continued to operate his dressing station underneath the shaking walls of La Motte, regardless of the danger of the roaring shells and of the gas. He maintained this forward position, not for convenience or personal safety, but for the benefit of the wounded who could be reached and cared for that much sooner.

The morning's action had been initiated by a general assault all along the line. While the 167th and 168th were struggling to gain the plateau north of Sergy, the Ohio and New York regiments were battling in vain against the defenses before Meurcy Farm and Seringes. They had crossed the Ourcq and had made a material advance in the face of desperate resistance, but by night had failed of their objectives. The 165th had carried the strong point of Meurcy Farm at the point of the bayonet, but the enemy retaliated on them with such a concentration of artillery fire from the Forêt de Nesles that they were forced out, retiring to the river road where they connected up with Ohio. To the left of the 166th, the French 62nd Division was attempting to capture Fère-en-Tardenois; but that stronghold was not to fall easily — not until the positions on the flank where the Americans were battling had given way. The 55th Brigade of the 28th Division, which had come in between the 168th and the American Third Division, had met with reverses; and not until evening did the Third Battalion of the 110th Infantry, commanded by Major Anderson, get in touch

with the First Battalion of the 168th, which had been waving in space in a vain endeavor to gain liaison with the Pennsylvania troops. Even then they were some distance to our rear.

The course of the day's fighting disclosed the fact that the 42nd Division alone was opposed by the 201st, 4th Guard, 6th Bavarian Reserve, and 10th Landwehr Divisions. At this time the density of the German line opposite the three American divisions — the 42nd, 28th, and 3rd — was greater than anywhere else along the Western Front. It was a tribute to the quality of our troops, and it indicated the vital importance of the position to the enemy.

All that night the Boche continued his bombardment, employing everything he possessed in his efforts to dislodge us, and machine gun bullets sang without cessation over the ridge. That part of the Second Battalion nearest Sergy suffered the most. Sweeping the slopes of Hill 212 and the valley below it, the Boche managed to keep the entire command at a high nervous pitch for hours. Then airplanes came over, shooting their guns promiscuously at our line and dropping bombs so close as to drive the heart up into one's throat and to make it lose a beat every now and then. The sky was a changing tapestry of black, shot with gold and red, and the earth, too, was red in blotches that could not be seen. Again the long, long wait until dawn, and the new terrors it might hold.

The three consecutive days of fighting had reduced the regiment by half — a check on the men, including the Supply Company, at midnight of the 28-29th returned 1527 effectives — and there was some speculation as to the wisdom of consolidating the regimental forces into

one battalion. At 7 p. m. Lieutenant Witherell had reported the strength of Company B to be less than 100. An hour later Major Stanley answered Colonel Bennett's request for strength report:

"Effectives in my battalion as follows: E 81; F 54; G 61; H 106; attached M. G. Company (Company C 151st M. G. Bn.) 51. Total 353."

At midnight M Company had 4 officers and 88 men for duty.

XXVI

THE CAPTURE OF SERGY

Just before dawn a message came from the regimental P. C. to announce that a fresh advance — toward Nesles — was scheduled to commence at seven o'clock. The Second Battalion was designated as the assault battalion of the 168th, with the First Battalion in support and the Third in reserve. This was at half past four, and as yet there were no specific orders — merely the warning from Brigade Headquarters that the advance would probably be ordered, and that was the information that Colonel Bennett transmitted to his battalion commanders.

Major Stanley was naturally interested in the details of the attack in which his troops were to play a leading part, so he inquired by runner what routes he was to follow in the event they were ordered forward. He again called attention to the strength of the enemy before him and to the weakness of his own command. In the meantime a patrol was out attempting to ascertain just how the Boches were holding the position.

Soon a courier arrived with Field Orders No. 10, Headquarters 84th Brigade, which the Colonel hastily relayed to the commanding officer of the Second Battalion. It directed an advance to commence at eight o'clock with the purpose of maintaining contact with and pursuing the *retreating* enemy! The higher authorities seemed bound to view the situation with optimism, but if any of them had come within three kilometers of the front they would soon have perceived that the enemy was in

anything but retreat. He was, on the contrary, firmly lodged in positions of almost impregnable security. The objective set for the 84th Brigade was a line some two kilometers north of the present position. The units on our right and left were to advance simultaneously.

Colonel Bennett also informed Major Stanley that our artillery was to shell Sergy, and directed him to avoid that village if he could do so without imperiling his flank. Brigade had also promised us an additional battalion of infantry and a battalion of motorized machine guns, one of which arrived some time after the attack had been scheduled and not in the manner prescribed, and the other shrouded itself with an impenetrable mantle of invisibility.

During the night the Boche had added to and readjusted his artillery. Convinced that he could not dislodge the Americans by infantry attack, he was going to see if he could blow them out. He began early in the morning by sweeping our positions on the hill, and as soon as it became light the enemy airplanes returned to harry the unprotected men crouching in the open foxholes. It was a bad beginning.

Already far over to the right the 55th Brigade was attempting to hurl its lines forward so that it could come abreast us for the general assault, but the Germans were pouring such a volume of fire into the smoke-obscured waves that they were promptly checked — a rebuff which vitally affected the actions of the 168th, and the 42nd Division in general.

The patrols from the Second Battalion had reported the enemy main position about a thousand yards in advance of the line of the Second Battalion, with isolated groups of machine guns posted nearer, and the intervening space well covered by cross-firing guns.

At ten minutes after eight the supporting troops on the right had not yet appeared; but on the left, south of Sergy, the scouts had got in touch with the First Battalion of the 167th, which had been thrown into the line to fill up the rift existing between their Second Battalion and Iowa, but which had not succeeded in altogether closing it.

In spite of his open flank and the menace from the woods, Major Stanley moved his scouts out at half past eight and attempted to follow with Companies G, H, and E, keeping F Company in support. The result could have been foretold; machine guns and artillery immediately arrested the movement. Our own artillery was not functioning, except for the intermittent shells that were falling, not on the Boches, but on our own troops; and fire was pouring in on the line from Sergy as well as from every other point on the compass, it seemed. The battalion commander asked for artillery preparation on the enemy entrenchments he had already noted, and also asked for additional machine guns and for the 37mm cannon to aid in silencing the opposition.

At twenty minutes of nine Major Worthington notified Colonel Bennett that the 110th Infantry on his right had not only been checked but that he had been informed by members of that organization that it was falling back. It was apparent that, if the 168th was to advance at all, it was to do it without protection on its flank.

The battle was now merrily on. Our lines were cut with machine gun fire from Sergy on one side, from the positions to the front, and from the church tower in Cierges to the right, which in violation of the rules of war was flying the Red Cross of Mercy. Shortly after nine o'clock our heavy field artillery opened up on the front

of the Third Battalion, finding a portion of M Company on the reverse slope of the hill. Lieutenant Van't Hof was struck in the head by a fragment from the first explosion, and was quickly carried off the field. But that gallant officer, who had distinguished himself in Lorraine and who was to receive the D. S. C. for his bravery in this action, never regained consciousness, and died on August 4th. Major Brewer's hasty message to the Colonel describes the situation at the moment. "Our 155's", he wrote, "opened up on our line just now, and the first shell fell 100 yards within my line and the next three on it. Lieutenant Van't Hof is either killed or badly wounded, and his platoon is shot all to Hell. Cannot we have effective liaison with the artillery? The Boche are shelling me on one side, and our artillery on the other."

The lines of the First Battalion, too, were being ripped up by enemy shells and its front was well covered by machine guns, though the greater part of this fire was being diverted to the struggling 110th Infantry on the right. Major Worthington reported that the low-flying enemy planes had enabled the enemy artillery to range upon his front with exactness, and he plead for some counter-battery work.

Neither the Third nor First Battalions had attempted to move, as their orders were to hold until the Second Battalion had cleared. But Major Stanley's men were not to get far this day. He would not push his weakened force forward against an impossible position. His efforts to advance had already demonstrated the great strength of the enemy, with his scores of machine guns in the Bois Pelger and the Bois de la Planchette, and he knew that any advance from the right of Sergy was

THE TOP OF THE HILL WHERE THE FIRST
BATTALION WAS STOPPED ON JULY 30TH

COLUMN OF ARTILLERY PASSING THROUGH SERGY A
WEEK AFTER ITS CAPTURE BY THE 168TH INFANTRY

COURTESY THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE CHURCH AT SERGY: A PEN AND INK DRAWING BY GEORGE A. PICKEN

unthinkable until these guns had been smothered. In addition there were to be conquered the machine gun pits concealed in the grain near the Sergy–Nesles road and on the heights just above the village overlooking it from the right.

It has been noted that Colonel Bennett had directed Major Stanley to avoid Sergy, principally because it was in the plan for our artillery to shell it, but at the time set for the advance not an American shell had come to annoy the Boches who were busily picking off our men on the hill. Should he avoid the village in the advance, which he was still prepared to make, the commander of the Second Battalion would have to send his men east of the town, out over Hill 212. This, in the circumstances, was out of the question, so he chose the alternative — to capture Sergy and thus clear the way for the advance in that direction.

As previously mentioned, Alabama held the village for a few hours on the 28th, until driven out by the severity of the enemy bombardment, and a small patrol of the 168th there met with disaster a few hours later. The next attempt secured permanent possession for the Americans.

Sergy figured largely in the dispatches and communiqués of the latter part of the month and subsequently in the newspaper headlines, not on account of the importance of the village itself but because it was visible on the map and easier to identify than the nameless surrounding hills where the actual fighting occurred.

Before the war it was a placid rural community whose inhabitants were content to work in their fields for six days and to rest and attend mass on the Sabbath. It was described, for military purposes, as a commune of 256

souls, 78 houses — which included the church, mairie, school, and café — and 20 wells. It was not noteworthy for its beauty nor was it overly clean, but it was picturesquely snuggled in between two hills rounded from the lovely countryside of orchards and checkered fields upon which it drew for its existence.

This was a country that had already known the horror of invasion. Sergy had been overrun by the German horde in September, 1914; but soon after, following the decisive fighting farther up the Ourcq, its women saw the columns of *feldgrau* give way before an inspired army in *képi* and *pantalon rouge*. From then until late May of 1918 the village was untroubled by actual contact with the war. But the forward surge from the Chemin des Dames on the 27th again carried the line past the Ourcq to the Marne, and on May 29th Sergy once more found itself in the hands of the enemy.

For eight long weeks the villagers saw nothing of the battle: they saw only interminable columns of soldiers and supplies going forward in the direction of Paris. Then came the sudden check to the German arms; the rumbling of cannon to the south, in the last week of July, became more distinct. Before long the Boches were setting up batteries and digging intrenchments in their very fields, and for the fourth time Fate shoved the helpless inhabitants into the arena where the contending forces were battling.

On the 26th of July the German *Kommandantur* ordered all the young women and boys to the rear, stating that they were making a retreat for strategic purposes but would soon return. That evening, while the guns thundered about them, they awaited anxiously the outcome of the struggle that they knew was taking place in

the Forêt de Fère. The dejected, sullen look of the retiring Boches, and the relays of wounded passing through that night and the following morning told them better than any communiqué how the enemy had fared in the contest.

Up to this time, however, the village was intact. There had been no localized fighting here in any of the earlier advances and subsequent recoils, and the Germans had seen no necessity — or had thought it beneath their notice — to destroy it. Had it sheltered a graceful 16th century church, or a lovely château, the story would have been different. But this time, before it had been entirely cleansed of the enemy, Sergy was to be left a smoking heap of battered masonry.

Lieutenant Chapman, leader of the Second Battalion Scouts, was at an observation post watching the movements of the Germans to the left of his position when Major Stanley came to him and told him that Sergy was to be taken, and that he and Lieutenant Vaughn of E Company had been chosen to effect its capture. The plan of the attack and size of the force to be employed were left to the judgment of the two officers. Lieutenant Chapman, who with his scouts had been operating to the east of the village, and knew that ground best, chose to move on it in direct frontal attack down the gradual sloping hill. Lieutenant Vaughn, with about twenty-five men from the Third Platoon of E Company, was to follow down the Ourcq and enter from the south.

When Chapman observed the E Company detachment to be in position, he gave the signal and crept forward with his eighteen scouts. Mindful of the fate of Corporal Flowers' patrol, this one filtered cautiously into the village in small groups. What appeared to be a machine

gun nest in a small clump of trees on the very edge of the town caused them to halt until Sergeant Williamson with two scouts investigated and found it abandoned. At the next signal the entire party rushed to the edge of the village and took cover behind the stone walls. Vaughn's group was in like manner entering from the rear.

Careful observation disclosed no signs of the enemy, so the scouts moved farther in, darting from wall to wall and from house to house. Corporal Paul Dixon and Private Arthur W. Kirchoff were left at the church to guard the rear while the others advanced in groups of three. In the meantime not a shot had been fired at the Americans, for the Boche outposts had withdrawn altogether. They first met with excitement when, in entering one of the houses, they found the trap door to the cellar securely locked while from the depths came the confused murmur of voices. The door was forced open, and out came an elderly man and woman, white and trembling. Upon order, the other occupants, another middle-aged couple and a young girl of fourteen, appeared. The first word to fall from the French lips was the cry "*Américains*" and they embraced their saviours, weeping hysterically. Soon most of the twenty-three civilians left in the town were induced to forsake their hiding places, and they came to add their thanks and sobs and embraces. One wondered, though, what joy they could find in their liberation, with their homes, which had been occupied by the same families for generations, in ruins about them, their fields scarred, and the harvest destroyed. One wondered, too, what crop these fields so liberally sown with steel would next produce.

With the imperfect French at their command, the Americans began a rapid-fire questioning, and learned

from the first woman, the wife of the mayor, that the main body of the Germans had evacuated the village the previous evening, leaving behind sufficient rear guards to harass us and obstruct our advance. Her house had been the headquarters of the colonel and his staff, and that officer had been the last to leave.

The others, fearing the consequences should the Germans return, were at first difficult to draw out; but when they were assured that the Americans were there in force and that the Boches were really being whipped, they talked freely. They had been told that there were some Americans in France, but that most of those who had left the States had been sunk by submarines. They had practically no food — only a loaf or two of moldy German black bread, unfit to eat, and a few litres of wine.

Only two of the inhabitants of Sergy had failed to greet the Iowans; a young mother and a very young baby, who were still lying on their improvised couch. When the infant had first seen the light, not of day, but of a sputtering candle — for its mother had given it birth in a damp cellar while shells were crashing through the walls overhead — there were no skilled hands to soothe, no doctor to attend. The battle, however, had been too great, and a few days later, both mother and child passed beyond the limits of pain and want.

Private Charles H. Miller was found alone in a cellar, just as the Boches had left him after hastily binding up his wounds. He was then in a serious condition, and as soon as possible was carried to the rear and on to the hospital, where after a brave but hopeless struggle he died.

As soon as the enemy detected or sensed the presence of Americans in the village, he opened up with his

machine guns and artillery a fire which increased in severity as they progressed through the center to the west edge where they were more exposed. Within an hour they had gone through the village, and at noon Major Stanley received word that it was clear. But no sooner did the patrol establish outposts and begin to move beyond the village toward the ridge to the north than a hurricane of fire drove them back.

Lieutenant Vaughn, in the meantime, had penetrated through the lower part of the village and had taken up a position just beyond the western edge, facing north. He had seen nothing of the enemy, but was being heavily shelled, and in a message to Chapman stated that he already had had twelve casualties. He was at the time trying to get in touch with Alabama.

At this juncture Major Stanley notified the two officers by runner that our artillery was about to shell Sergy (it was probably the belated preparation that had been set for early morning and which could not then be stopped on account of lack of liaison with the artillery) and that they had best take to cover. So amid the deadly fire of the enemy came the blasts of our own 75's, and for thirty minutes the men lived through an inferno — shells crashing everywhere, splinters flying in all directions, roofs falling in. Then the firing on both sides ceased altogether, and Chapman went through the village to check up his positions and losses. At the church corner he found the shattered and almost unrecognizable bodies of Dixon and Kirchoff. A shell hole within a few feet told the story. These two had been the only casualties in his party.

He then went to Lieutenant Vaughn's position. This group had been under a terrific bombardment, too, and felt themselves fortunate to have lost but twelve. By

lying under the banks of the narrow stream that cuts through the lower western end of the village, they had found comparative safety. While Chapman was there, one of Vaughn's runners returned from the Alabama regiment with a message from Captain Jackson giving his position as from 500 to 700 yards west of Sergy.

Some time after the village had been reported clear of the enemy and outposts had been established fifty yards beyond it, that part of the regiment on the left slope of Hill 212 was amazed to see a large body of men in combat formation, bayonets fixed, scouts out, stealthily advancing from the rear. The first thought was that in some unaccountable way the Boches had got in behind our lines and were attacking us from the rear, and they steeled themselves for a last stand. But as the line came nearer the khaki uniforms and steel helmets identified them as Americans.

A Second Battalion runner on his way back to Regimental Headquarters with a message from the line was the first to greet them.

"Where are you fellows going, Buddy", he asked one of the scouts. "What is your outfit?"

"This is the Third Battalion of the 47th Infantry. We're going to take that town", he said, pointing to Sergy.

"Oh, is that so?", returned the Iowan, a bit baffled. "Our men are out in front of it now. Welcome to our city."

In view of the frightful losses already incurred by the 168th and the stern fight that was still ahead of it, a battalion of the 47th Infantry had been attached to it as a supplementary force by an order that reached Colonel Bennett in the evening of the 28th. At eight o'clock the

next morning Major Heidt, who was in command of the two battalions of the 47th Infantry assigned to the 84th Brigade, one of which had similarly been attached to the 167th Infantry, reported to Colonel Bennett at La Cense Farm. As there was no immediate call for its employment, Captain Ross, the Regimental Operations Officer, led Major Heidt to a depression in a wheat field to the left of La Cense which was protected from artillery fire, and told him to bring his battalion up to that spot, have his men dig in, and there await orders.

Several hours later this battalion, following the valley of the Rû de la Croix Blanche, moved on past the Favière Farm and up toward the Ourcq River. Although it was subject to the orders of the 168th, the battalion had acted wholly without order in this advance, and had, in fact, completely ignored the directions personally given by Captain Ross. It is possible, however, that Major Heidt (he accompanied them to the river, although Major Cole was in command of the battalion) mistook the position that had been indicated and went beyond it.

At any rate, when their troops reached the open space south of the Ourcq which we had so carefully avoided because of the exposure to artillery fire, the Boche opened up on them with a furious bombardment and all but tore them to pieces. Here Major Heidt was wounded and forced to the rear. But they continued almost to the outskirts of the village.

At this point Major Stanley, having witnessed the futile advance from his P. C., went back to their position and met Captain Roberts of I Company who told him that his battalion commander, Major Cole, had also been wounded and had been taken away with the orders. He himself had little idea as to what the orders were, except

that they were to report to the 168th Infantry. Major Stanley then directed him to dig in in the woods along the Ourcq and keep out of sight, and to report his position to Colonel Bennett at La Cense Farm. He also told him that we were putting no men in Sergy itself because of the artillery fire, but that we had it circled with outposts.

It was about half past one when Captain Roberts reported to Regimental Headquarters that he had withdrawn to the woods bordering the river, about five hundred yards north of La Motte Farm, and would there await further orders.

But to the astonishment of all, about an hour later, the battalion again moved out in the direction of Sergy. It was tragic. When they started across the Ourcq the Boche proceeded to shell them unmercifully, and spread his fire to include the positions of the 168th, so that six members of Company E were struck before they could get to cover. The casualties in the 47th Infantry were heavy and the battalion now withdrew in disorder.

At 3:40 P. M. Colonel Bennett dispatched a runner with the message:

"The senior officer of the battalion of the 47th Infantry will assume command and reorganize the battalion. Have the troops dig in for shelter in suitable position. Send one runner from each company to these headquarters until the battalion is reorganized, and then Battalion runners."

It was not until 5:35 that the runner from the 168th was able to locate the senior officer of the decimated battalion. From his position in the woods 600 yards southwest of Sergy, Captain Roberts, through Lieutenant Cotton, informed Colonel Bennett that he had received his message and would proceed immediately with the re-

organization of his men. It was reported that soon after, Captain Roberts was put out of action by an enemy shell, and the command then passed to Captain Ross Snyder of Company M.

An imaginative report of the 47th Infantry outlined such stirring incidents as counter-attacks and hand-to-hand encounters with the Boches in the streets of Sergy, but if any of the enemy did succeed in eluding our outposts and got back into the village, they withdrew as invisibly, for none were seen by members of the 168th, either coming or going. The message of Captain Roberts marks the end of this action of the Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, as viewed by the Iowa regiment.

Now that Sergy was clear of the enemy, Major Stanley prepared to send his battalion forward through the town, thus avoiding, in the advance north, the more exposed area beyond the village to the east. But when he informed Colonel Bennett of the enemy machine gun strength which he would have to face with an open flank, he was directed to hold where he was and not to attempt to advance in any circumstance until the machine guns had been silenced. The Colonel was unwilling to further sacrifice his men, and gave the order to dig in and wait for the 28th Division to come up on the right. On account of the violent shelling which our occupation had brought down upon the village, it was to be held with a small force — just enough to maintain liaison with Alabama and to prevent enemy snipers from working in.

The line of the 168th was facing generally northeast, as was that of the 28th Division. But the direction of the attack for the day was due north, and the troops on our right, in order to come up on a line with the assault battalion of our regiment would have to swing almost at

right angles through an arc of nearly three kilometers. A stubborn obstacle in the stronghold of Cierges must first be overcome.

About half past three a liaison officer of the 110th Infantry came to the P. C. of the Second Battalion and told Major Stanley that his regiment was to connect up with us on the right, but that it had not yet come into position. Not long after, the troops in the right half of our sector saw the men of the Keystone Division make a gallant attempt to push across the shell-swept plateau south of Cierges, and saw them checked and hurled back by the violence of the enemy fire.

Throughout the afternoon and evening Sergy and other parts of our lines were shelled unmercifully, and the machine gun firing was unceasing. A Boche battery of 88's in the Bois de Meunière, to the southeast of Cierges, was registering direct hits along the right of the line, parts of which had been considered, by reason of the protecting slope, fairly safe from artillery fire. The guns to the north and east, aided by the enemy planes that unopposed searched out our positions, tried to reach the road where the main body of the regiment was dug in. Shell after shell skimmed over, just missing the target and bursting with ear-splitting crashes in the valley below. In addition, the regimental P. C., the dressing station, and all the lines to the rear were constantly covered by the Boche field pieces. By this time our supporting artillery had commenced a lively counter-fire, but many of our own shells fell dangerously close to our lines, driving a portion of I Company from its forward position up on the hill.

Although our advance had been held up by lack of flank support, the regiments of the 83rd Brigade had moved

forward and engaged in a hot fight. After a long artillery fire of destruction, the 165th captured the Bois Colas and flanked Meurcy Farm, but was unable to occupy it. The Ohioans of the 166th, on their left, in a brilliant charge captured Hill 184, and toward evening swooped down upon the village of Seringes-et-Nesles and gained possession of all but the extreme northern portion.

The men of the 168th were tired, haggard, and worn. They had not had a meal since leaving the Forêt de Fère, subsisting only on what reserve rations they could find in the packs of their dead comrades. They were suffering from the effects of drinking the polluted water of the Ourcq — a digestive disorder almost acute enough to be termed dysentery, which sapped their already overtaxed strength. During the late afternoon a fairly good meal was sent forward to the famishing soldiers, and it was arranged so that they could eat in relays; but now that they had food, they found they could eat but little. The combination of upset stomachs, prolonged fasting, and the constant breathing of poisonous gas fumes had reduced their inclination and capacity for food.

The engagement had told on their nerves, and one could not blame them for getting a bit jumpy. They had seen more than half of those who had entered the battle with them leave the field wounded, and within plain sight lay many awaiting the burial squads. They were beginning to ask "When are we going to be relieved?" Had they known what horrors were yet before them, they might not have had the courage to carry on. Fortunately, they could not see into the future. That was all that was spared them.

At nightfall our lines were still at the position of noon, extending from Sergy on the left, up over Hill 212, with

the right turning sharply across the Ourcq. Lieutenant Pearsall was now directed to take over the outpost positions in front of Sergy, and when it became dark enough to move his men without danger of observation, Sergeant Samuelson led the Second Platoon of G Company out to relieve the detachments already in position.

It was a long, long night for every one in the line. A mournful unending threnody of wailing shells and screaming shrapnel, a nerve-wracking chant of staccato machine guns. These nights were not for sleeping. Darkness was the time of alert. It meant the dangers of the day multiplied and magnified — lurking enemies, dreaded surprise attacks, deadly showers of gas. Night — it was the screen under which the burial squads crept up and took the dead away.

A rumor of a counter-attack at eleven o'clock sent a runner at full speed to order the outposts at Sergy to withdraw. Sergeant Samuelson hastily assembled his platoon and moved back to the road on a line with the main body. After a lapse of several hours, when no enemy appeared, they returned quietly to their position. The advance group, under the sergeant, had nearly reached the line when someone directly ahead challenged in first class American, "Halt — who is there?" It turned out to be Private Harris, who had been overlooked in the hurry to withdraw, in consequence of which he alone had been holding that part of the regimental front for a considerable period in the face of a threatened attack. When apprised of the situation, Harris's eyes bulged a bit and his jaw sagged perceptibly, but his quick recovery was no doubt due to pride in the fact that he had established a record for individual responsibility and service within the regiment.

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